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PATTERN PROSE

PART II

PATTERN PROSE

or

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By

RICHARD WILSON



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PATTERN PROSE

PART II

A Study of the Story

By

RICHARD WILSON



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PREFACE

THIS book is intended to provide material for a study of the story in its varied forms. Study notes and commentary are provided at the end of the volume, and are meant to be used in individual work before class reading and discussion take place. The pupil is, however, recommended to read the story in the first place for enjoyment only.

A list of books containing other short stories is also given in the hope that it will be found useful in connection with the school or public library.

For permission to use copyright stories, thanks are due and are hereby tendered to Mr. John Buchan for *Manoa the Golden*; Mr. Hilaire Belloc for *The Night after Hastings*, from *The Eye-Witness*; and the representatives of the late Mr. Bernard Gilbert for *The Hordle Poacher*.

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PATTERN PROSE

PART II

The House-dog and the Wolf

A LEAN hungry Wolf chanced one moonshiny night to fall in with a plump well-fed House-dog.

After the first compliments were passed between them, "How is it, my friend," said the Wolf, "that you look so sleek? How well your food agrees with you! and here am I striving for my living night and day, and can hardly save myself from starving."

"Well," says the Dog, "if you would fare like me, you have only to do as I do."

"Indeed!" says he, "and what is that?"

"Why," replies the Dog, "just to guard the master's house and keep off the thieves at night."

"With all my heart; for at present I have but a sorry time of it. This woodland life, with its frosts and rains, is sharp work for me. To have a warm roof over my head and a stomachful of victuals always at hand will, methinks, be no bad exchange."

"True," says the Dog; "therefore you have nothing to do but to follow me."

Now as they were jogging on together, the Wolf spied a mark in the Dog's neck, and having a strange curiosity, could not forbear asking what it meant.

"Pooh! nothing at all," says the Dog.

"Nay, but pray——" says the Wolf.

"Oh! a mere trifle, perhaps the collar to which my chain is fastened——"

“Chain!” cries the Wolf in surprise; “you don’t mean to say that you cannot rove when and where you please?”

“Why, not exactly perhaps; you see I am looked upon as rather fierce, so they sometimes tie me up in the daytime, but I assure you I have perfect liberty at night, and the master feeds me off his own plate, and the servants give me their tit-bits, and I am such a favourite, and—but what is the matter? where are you going?”

“Oh, good-night to you,” says the Wolf; “you are welcome to your dainties; but for me, *a dry crust with liberty against a king’s luxury with a chain.*”

Fables of Æsop.

The Old Woman and the Physician

An old Woman, who had become blind, called in a Physician, and promised him, before witnesses, that if he would restore her eyesight, she would give him a most handsome reward, but that if he did not cure her, and her malady remained, he should receive nothing.

The agreement being concluded, the Physician tampered from time to time with the old lady’s eyes, and meanwhile, bit by bit, carried off her goods.

At length after a time he set about the task in earnest and cured her, and thereupon asked for the stipulated fee. But the old Woman, on recovering her sight, saw none of her goods left in the house.

When, therefore, the Physician importuned her in vain for payment, and she continually put him off with excuses, he summoned her at last before the Judges.

Being now called upon for her defence, she said, “What this man says is true enough; I promised to give him his fee if my sight were restored, and nothing if my eyes continued bad. Now then he says that I am cured, but I say just the contrary; for when my

malady first came on, I could see all sorts of furniture and goods in my house ; but now, when he says he has restored my sight, I cannot see one jot of either."

Fables of Æsop.

The Unstrung Bow

AN Athenian seeing Æsop in a crowd of boys at play with nuts, stopped and laughed at him for a madman. As soon as the Sage,—a laugher at others rather than one to be laughed at,—perceived this, he placed an unstrung bow in the middle of the road : " Hark you, wise man," said he, " unriddle what I have done."

The people gather round. The man torments his invention a long time, but cannot make out the reason of the proposed question. At last he gives up. Upon this, the victorious Philosopher says : " You will soon break the bow if you always keep it bent ; but if you loosen it, it will be fit for use when you want it."

Fables of Phædrus.

The Shipwreck of Simonides

A LEARNED man has always a fund of riches in himself.

Simonides, who wrote such excellent poems, the more easily to support his poverty, began to make a tour of the celebrated cities of Asia, singing the praises of victors for such reward as he might receive.

After he had become enriched by this kind of gain, he resolved to return to his native land by sea (for he was born, it is said, in the island of Ceos). Accordingly he embarked in a ship, which a dreadful tempest, together with its own rottenness, caused to founder at sea.

Some gathered together their girdles, others their precious effects, which formed the support of their

existence. One who was over inquisitive remarked : "Are you going to save none of your property, Simonides ?" He made reply : "All my possessions are about me."

A few only made their escape by swimming, for the majority, being weighed down by their burdens, perished. Some thieves too made their appearance, and seized what each person had saved, leaving him naked.

Clazomenæ, an ancient city, chanced to be near ; to which the shipwrecked persons repaired.

Here a person devoted to the pursuits of literature, who had often read the lines of Simonides, and was a very great admirer of him though he had never seen him, knowing from his very language who he was, received him with the greatest pleasure into his house, and furnished him with clothes, money, and attendants.

The others meanwhile were begging for victuals. Simonides chanced to meet them ; and, as soon as he saw them, remarked : "I told you that all my property was about me ; what you have endeavoured to save is lost."

Fables of Phædrus.

The Elephant and the Jackal

IN the forest of Brahma lives an Elephant, whom when the Jackals saw, they said among themselves : "If this animal can by any stratagem be killed, we shall be supplied with food from his carcass for four months."

An old Jackal upon this boldly said : "By my sagacity and courage his death shall be effected." He accordingly went close to the Elephant, and saluting him by bending his whole body, thus addressed him : "Divine beast ! grant me the favour of an interview."

"Who art thou?" said the Elephant, "and whence dost thou come hither?" "I am," replied he, "a Jackal, surnamed Little and Wise, and am sent into thy presence by the assembled inhabitants of these woods. Since the vast forest cannot subsist without a king, it is therefore determined to perform the ceremony of washing thee, as sovereign of the forest; thee who art possessed of every princely virtue. Lest, therefore, the fortunate time for thy inauguration should slip away, come quickly."

So saying, he rose, and erecting his tail, ran on; while the Elephant, conceiving in his mind the desire of royalty, marched in the same road with the Jackal, and stuck in a deep bog.

"Friend Jackal," said he, "what can now be contrived for my escape? I am fallen into a quagmire, and cannot rise out of it."

The Jackal said, laughing, "Take hold of my tail, my lord, and get out by the help of it."

"Such is the fruit," said the Elephant, "of my confidence in your deceitful speech."

Hindu Fable.

The Monkeys and the Bell

A NOISE only, when the cause of it is unknown, must not be dreaded.

One day a thief, escaping from a house in which he had stolen a Bell, was killed and eaten by a tiger on the top of this mountain; and the Bell, which had dropped from his hand, was taken up by some Monkeys, who from time to time made it sound.

The people of the town having discovered that a man had been killed, and hearing continually the noise of the Bell, said that the Demon had in his rage eaten him, and they all fled from the town.

It came into the head of a certain woman that the

Bell was only sounded by Monkeys ; and she went to the King, saying, " If you will advance me a large sum of money, I will make the Demon quiet."

The King gave her a treasure, and she, having paid adoration to a certain quarter of the globe, made idols, and formed circles, and acquired great reputation for sanctity ; she then took such fruits as Monkeys love, and having entered the forest, scattered them about, which action the Monkeys perceiving, quitted the Bell, and eagerly devoured the fruits.

The woman took up the Bell, and went with it to the palace of the King, where all the people did her reverence.

Hence a noise only, when the cause of it is unknown, must not be dreaded.

Hindu Fable.

The Three Rogues

ONCE there was a Brahmin who bought a goat in another village, and carrying it home on his shoulder, was seen by three Rogues, who said to one another : " If by some contrivance that goat can be taken from him, it will be great pleasure to us."

With this view they sat down under three trees, at some distance from each other in the road by which the Brahmin was to pass.

One of the Scoundrels called out, as he was going by : " O Brahmin ! why dost thou carry that dog on thy shoulder ? " " It is not a dog," answered the Brahmin ; " it is a goat for a sacrifice."

Then at a certain distance away, the second Knave put the same question to him ; which when the Brahmin heard, he threw the goat down on the ground, and after looking at it again and again, placed it a second time on his shoulder, and walked on with a mind waving like a swing.

The Brahmin heard the same question from the third Villain, was persuaded that the goat was really a dog, and taking it from his back, threw it down, and having washed himself, returned to his home.

The three Rogues took the goat to their own house, and feasted on it. Thence he who thinks a knave as honest as himself is deceived by him, like this Brahmin who was ruined.

Hindu Fable.

The Poor Man who became a Great King

IT being the pleasure of Heaven to rescue from misery a Man who lived in extreme poverty, Providence gave him a Son, who from his infancy showed signs that he would one day come to be a great man. This infant became an immediate blessing to the old Man's house, for his wealth increased from day to day, from the time that the child was born.

So soon as this young one could speak, he talked of nothing but swords, and bows and arrows. The Father sent him to school, and did all he could to infuse into him a good relish of learning; but he neglected his book, and devoted his thoughts to nothing but running at the ring, and other warlike exercises with the other children.

When he came to the years of discretion, "Son," said his Father to him, "thou art now past the age of childhood, and art in the greatest danger to fall into disorder. I therefore intend to prevent that accident by marrying thee betimes."

"Dear father," replied the stripling, "for Heaven's sake, refuse me not the loved one which my youthful years have already made choice of."

"Who is that loved one?" presently replied the old Man, with great earnestness and uneasiness (for he had already looked out for him the daughter of a

neighbouring hind, and agreed on the matter with her father), “ and what is her condition ? ”

“ This is she,” the lad made answer, showing his Father a very noble sword ; “ and by virtue of this I expect to become master of a throne.”

The Father gave him many reasons to imagine he disapproved his intentions, and looked on them as little better than madness : many a good lecture followed during the remainder of the day ; to avoid which for the future the young hero the next morning quitted his Father’s house, and travelled in search of opportunities to show his courage.

Many years he warred under the command of different Monarchs : at length, after he had everywhere distinguished himself, not only by his conduct, but by his personal courage, a neighbouring Monarch, who, with his whole family, lay besieged in a small fortress, sent to him to beseech him to accept of the command of all his forces, to get them together, and endeavour to raise the siege, and relieve them ; in which, if he succeeded, he would make him his adopted son, and the heir of his vast empire.

Our young warrior engaged in this, raised a vast army, fought the besiegers in their trenches, entirely conquered them, and was the gainer of a glorious victory : but, alas ! the heat of the action made him not perceive that the fortress in which the King was, was in flames ; some treacherous person had fired it, and the King and his whole family perished in the flames.

The old Monarch just lived, however, to see his deliverer, and to settle on him the inheritance of his crown. The Royal Family being all extinct by this fatal calamity, the nobles ratified the grant, and our illustrious hero lived many years a great and glorious monarch.

“ I have recited this example,” said the Falcon to the Raven, “ that you may understand that I also

find myself born to undertake great enterprises: I have a strange foreboding within me, that I shall prove no less fortunate than this famous warrior; and for this reason can never quit my design."

When the Raven perceived him so fixed in his resolution, he consented to his putting it in execution: persuaded that so noble a courage would never be guilty of idle or unworthy actions.

The Falcon having taken his leave of the Raven, and bid farewell to all his brethren, left the nest and flew away; long he continued flying, and in love with liberty, and at length stopped upon a high mountain; here, looking round about him, he spied a Partridge in the fallow grounds that made all the neighbouring hills resound with her note.

Presently the Falcon swooped upon her, and having got her in his talons, began to tear and eat her. "This is no bad beginning," said he to himself; "though it were for nothing but to taste such delicate food; 'tis better travelling than to lie sleeping in a nasty nest, and feed upon carrion, as my brothers do."

Thus he spent three days in nursing himself with delicate morsels; but on the fourth, being on the top of another mountain, he saw a company of men that were hawking; these happened to be the King of the country with all his court; and while he was gazing upon them, he saw their Falcon in pursuit of a Heron.

Upon that, pricked forward by a noble emulation, he flies with all his force, gets before the King's Falcon, and overtakes the Heron.

The King, admiring this agility, commands his Falconers to make use of all their cunning to catch this noble bird, which by good luck they did. And in a little time he so entirely won the affection of the King, that he did him the honour to carry him usually upon his own hand.

"Had he always stayed in his nest," concluded the Monarch, "this good fortune had never befallen him.

And you see by this, that it is no unprofitable thing to travel. It rouses the genius of people, and renders them capable of noble achievements."

Hindu Fable.

A Raven, a Fox, and a Serpent

A RAVEN had once built her nest for many seasons together in a convenient cleft of a mountain ; but however pleasing the place was to her, she had always reason enough to resolve to lay there no more ; for every time she hatched, a Serpent came and devoured her young ones.

The Raven complaining to a Fox that was one of her friends, said to him, " Pray tell me, what would you advise me to do to be rid of this Serpent ? "

" What do you think you will do ? " asked the Fox.

" Why, my present intent is," replied the Raven, " to go and peck out the Serpent's eyes when he is asleep, that so he may no longer find the way to my nest."

The Fox disapproved of this design, and told the Raven that it became a prudent person to manage his revenge in such a manner that no mischief might befall himself in taking it. " Never run yourself," says he, " into the misfortune that once befell the Crane, of which I will tell you the Fable."

Hindu Fable.

The Crane and the Craw-fish

A Crane had once settled her habitation by the side of a broad and deep lake, and lived upon such fish as she could catch in it ; these she got in plenty enough for many years ; but at length having become old and feeble, she could fish no longer.

In this afflicting circumstance she began to reflect,

with sorrow, on the carelessness of her past years. "I did ill," said she to herself, "in not making in my youth necessary provision to support me in my old age ; but, as it is, I must now make the best of a bad market, and use cunning to get a livelihood as I can."

With this resolution she placed herself by the water-side, and began to sigh and look mighty melancholy. A Craw-fish, perceiving her at a distance, accosted her, and asked her why she appeared so sad ?

"Alas," said she, "how can I choose but grieve, seeing my daily nourishment is like to be taken from me ? for I just now heard this talk between two fishermen passing this way : said the one to the other, 'Here is great store of fish, what think you of clearing this pond ?' to whom his companion answered, 'No ; there is more in such a lake : let us go thither first, and then come hither the day afterwards.' This they will certainly perform ; and then," added the Crane, "I must soon prepare for death."

The Craw-fish, on this, went to the other fish, and told them what she had heard : upon which the poor fish, in great perplexity, swam immediately to the Crane, and addressing themselves to her, told her what they had heard, and added, "We are now in so great a consternation, that we are come to desire your protection. Though you are our enemy, yet the wise tell us that they who make their enemy their sanctuary may be assured of being well received : you know full well that we are your daily food ; and if we are destroyed, you, who are now too old to travel in search of food, must also perish ; we pray you, therefore, for your own sake, as well as ours, to consider, and tell us what you think is the best course for us to take."

To which the Crane replied, "That which you tell me, I heard myself from the mouths of the fishermen ; we have no power sufficient to withstand them ; nor do I know any other way to secure you, but this : it will be many months before they can clear the other

pond they are to go about first ; and, in the meantime, I can at times, and as my strength will permit me, remove you one after another into a little pond here hard by, where there is very good water, and where the fishermen can never catch you, by reason of the extraordinary depth."

The fish approved this counsel, and desired the Crane to carry them one by one into this pond. Nor did she fail to fish up three or four every morning, but she carried them no farther than to the top of a small hill, where she ate them : and thus she feasted herself for a while.

But one day, the Craw-fish, having a desire to see this delicate pond, made known her curiosity to the Crane, who, bethinking herself that the Craw-fish was her most mortal enemy, resolved to get rid of her at once, and murder her as she had done the rest ; with this design she flung the Craw-fish upon her neck, and flew towards the hill.

But when they came near the place, the Craw-fish, spying at a distance the small bones of her slaughtered companions, mistrusted the Crane's intention, and laying hold of a fair opportunity, got her neck in her claw, and grasped it so hard, that she fairly saved herself, and strangled the Crane.

" This example," said the Fox, " shows you that crafty, tricking people often become victims to their own cunning."

The Raven, returning thanks to the Fox for his good advice, said, " I shall not by any means neglect your wholesome instructions ; but what shall I do ? "

" Why," replied the Fox, " you must snatch up something that belongs to some stout man or other, and let him see what you do, to the end he may follow you. That he may easily do this, do you fly slowly ; and when you are just over the Serpent's hole, let fall

the thing that you hold in your beak or talons, whatever it be, for then the person that follows you, seeing the Serpent come forth, will not fail to knock him on the head."

The Raven did as the Fox advised her, and by that means was delivered from the Serpent.

What cannot be done by strength is to be performed by policy.

Hindu Fable.

The House of Cards

A KIND husband, his wife, and two pretty children, lived peacefully in the village where their parents had resided before them. This couple sharing the care of the little household, cultivated their garden, and gathered in their harvests; on summer evenings, supping beneath the green foliage, and in winter before their hearth, they talked to their sons of virtue, wisdom, and of the happiness which these would always procure. The father enlivened his discourse by a story, the mother by a kiss.

The elder of these children, naturally grave and studious, read and reflected incessantly; the younger, merry and active, was always jumping and laughing, and never happy but at play.

One evening, according to custom, seated at a table beside their parents, the elder was reading a history book, the younger, careless about being acquainted with the grand achievements of the Romans and Parthians, was employing all his ingenuity, all his skill, in erecting a fragile House of Cards; he scarcely breathed for fear of demolishing it.

The student leaving off for a moment, said, "Father, be so good as to inform me why certain warriors are called conquerors, and others founders of empires; have these two names a different meaning?"

The father was thinking of a proper answer, when

pond they are to go about first ; and, in the meantime, I can at times, and as my strength will permit me, remove you one after another into a little pond here hard by, where there is very good water, and where the fishermen can never catch you, by reason of the extraordinary depth."

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Pattern Prose—Part II

his younger son, transported with pleasure at having, after so much trouble, succeeded in building a second story, cried out: "I have done it!"

His brother, angry at the noise, with a single blow destroyed that which it had taken him so long to erect, and made him burst into tears.

"My son," then replied the father, "the founder is your brother, and you are the conqueror."

Fables of Florian.

Jupiter and the Horse

"FATHER of man and beast," said the Horse, approaching the throne of Jupiter, "it is said that I am one of the noblest of the creations with which you have adorned the world, and my vanity bids me believe it. But do you not think my form still capable of improvement?"

"And what dost thou suppose would improve thee? Speak; I am open to instruction," said the gracious Jupiter, smiling.

"Perhaps," continued the Horse, "I should have more speed if my legs were longer and more slender; a long swan-like neck would add to my beauty; a broader chest would increase my strength; and, once for all, since you have destined me to carry your favourite, Man, it might be as well if the saddle, which

the benevolent horseman supplies me with, were a part of my body."

"Good," pursued Jupiter: "have patience a moment!" and, with a solemn air, the god spoke the word of creation. The dust moved, matter was combined; and suddenly stood before the throne, the friskful Camel.

The Horse now, shuddered, and tumbled from

"Here are longer and more slender legs," said Jove; "here is a long swan-like neck; a broader chest; a ready created saddle! Dost thou desire to be endowed with a similar form?"

The Horse still trembled.

"Go," continued Jupiter, "and this time the rebuke shall suffice without the addition of punishment. To remind thee occasionally, however, of thy audacity, this new creation shall continue to exist!" —then, casting a sustaining glance upon the Camel, Jupiter continued, "and the horse shall never perceive thee without fear and trembling."

Fables of Lessing.

The Beasts striving for Precedence

IN FOUR FABLES

I

A SERIOUS dispute arose among the Beasts as to who should take precedence of his neighbour. "I propose," said the Horse, "that we call in Man to settle the matter; he is not one of the disputants, and can therefore be more impartial."

"But has he sufficient understanding for it?" asked the Mole. "It appears to me that it must be very acute to detect all our deeply-hidden perfections."

"That was well thought of!" said the Marmot.

"Undoubtedly!" exclaimed also the Hedgehog. "I can never believe that Man possesses sufficient penetration for the task."

"Silence!" commanded the Horse. "We know well enough that he who can place least reliance on the merits of his cause is always the readiest to doubt the wisdom of his judge."

II

Man, therefore, was made arbitrator. "Another word with thee," said the majestic Lion to him, "before thou pronouncest judgment! By what standard dost thou intend to fix our relative worth?"

"By what standard? Doubtless," replied the Man, "according as you are more or less useful to me."

"Excellent!" returned the offended Lion. "How much lower in the scale should I rank than the ass! Man! thou canst not judge for us. Quit the assembly!"

III

The Man retired. "Now," said the sneering Mole (and the Marmot and Hedgehog again chimed in with their friend), "dost thou perceive, friend Dobbin? the Lion also thinks that Man is not fit to be our judge. The Lion thinks like us."

"But from weightier reasons than ye!" said the Lion, glancing contemptuously at the speaker.

IV

The Lion continued: "This struggle for precedence is but a sheer waste of time! Whether you regard me as the highest or the least is perfectly immaterial. Enough, I know my power!" Thus speaking, he rose, and left the assembly.

He was followed by the sage Elephant, the fearless Tiger, the grave Bear, the cunning Fox, the noble Horse; in short, all who felt their own worth, or thought they felt it.

Those who went away last, and murmured most at the breaking up of the assembly, were—the Ape and the Donkey.

Fortune and the Beggar

A WRETCHED Beggar with a ragged old wallet was creeping along from house to house ; and as he grumbled at his lot he kept wondering why rich folks should be always unsatisfied, and why they should go so far as to lose all they had by craving for new riches.

At that moment Fortune suddenly appeared to the Beggar, and said, " Listen ! I have long wished to help you. Here is a lot of ducats I have found. Hold out your wallet and I will fill it with them ;—but only on this condition : All shall be gold that falls into the wallet, but if any of it falls out of the wallet to the ground it shall become dust. Your wallet is old. Do not overload it beyond its powers."

Our Beggar is almost too overjoyed to breathe. He scarcely feels the ground beneath his feet. He opens his wallet, and a golden stream of ducats is poured into it. The wallet soon becomes rather heavy.

" Is that enough ? "

" Not yet."

" Isn't it cracking ? "

" Never fear."

" Consider, you're quite a wealthy man."

" Just a little more ; just add a handful."

" There, it's full. Take care : the wallet is going to burst."

" Just a little bit more."

But at that moment the wallet split ; the treasure fell through, and turned to dust ; and Fortune disappeared. The Beggar had nothing but his broken wallet, and so was poorer than before.

Envy burning Itself

CWTA CYFARWYDD, of Glamorgan, had a son named Howel, who was brought up by his father in every honourable acquirement and in all knowledge.

When Howel grew up, he wished to follow his fortunes about the world. As he set out, his father gave him this advice : Never to pass by the preaching of God's word without stopping to listen.

So Howel departed ; and after travelling a long way, he came to the seashore, where the road passed over a long, smooth, and level beach. And Howel, with the point of his staff, wrote on the sand the following old proverb : " Whoso wishes evil to his neighbour, to himself will it come."

And as he was writing it, behold, a powerful nobleman overtook him ; and on seeing the beauty of the writing, he knew that Howel was not a common rustic, and he asked him whence he came, and who he was, and whither he was going. And Howel gave him courteous answers to all he had asked him.

The nobleman admired him much, and asked him if he would come and live with him as his domestic clerk, in order to manage for him all matters of learning and knowledge ; and he promised him a salary suitable to a gentleman. So Howel agreed with him, and went to live with him.

And all the noblemen and knights who came to visit this nobleman were amazed at the learning and wisdom of Howel, and praised him greatly, so that the nobleman became jealous of him for excelling him so vastly in wisdom, and learning, and good breeding.

Howel's fame increased daily, and in the same measure did the envy of the nobleman, his master, increase. And one day he complained to his lady of the great evil and disrespect that Howel had caused him, and he counselled with her about slaying him.

And she, in her great affection for him, bethought her how to do it.

The nobleman had on his property lime-burners, burning lime ; and the lady went to them, and gave them a large sum of gold, upon condition of their throwing into the kiln the first person who should come to them with a vessel of mead ; and they promised to do so ; and the lady, when she returned home, mentioned the plan to her husband ; and they filled a large vessel with mead and ordered Howel to take it to the lime-burners.

Howel took the vessel and carried it towards the kiln ; and on the way he heard in a house an old and godly man reading the Word of God ; and he turned in to listen to him, and stayed with him a long time, according to his father's advice.

After this delay, the nobleman concluded that Howel was by this time burnt in the kiln ; so he took another vessel of mead as a reward to the lime-burners ; and when he came to the kiln, he was seized by the lime-burners, and thrown into the fire in the kiln, and burnt there.

Thus did envy burn itself.

Welsh Fable.

Odysseus and Polyphemus

THE war at Troy was over. The Greeks had burnt the great city of Priam ; and Odysseus and all the other princes of Greece set out in their ships to go home.

But the winds and storms carried them away to many lands. Only a few reached the countries which they had left to go to Troy ; and these were tossed about for a long time on the sea, and went through great toil and many dangers.

At first the ships of Odysseus went on merrily with a fresh breeze ; and the men thought that they would

soon come to rocky Ithaca, where their homes were. But Athena, the goddess of wisdom, was angry with Odysseus, and she asked Poseidon, the lord of the sea, to send a great storm and scatter his ships. So the wind arose, and the waters of the sea began to heave and swell, and the sky was black with clouds and rain. Many days and many nights the storm raged fiercely ; and when it was over, Odysseus could only see four or five of all the ships which had sailed with him from Troy.

The ships were drenched with the waves which had broken over them, and the men were wet and cold and tired ; and they were glad indeed when they saw an island far away. So they sat down on the benches, and took the great oars, and rowed the ships towards the shore : and as they came near, they saw that the island was very beautiful, with cliffs and rocks, and bays for ships to take shelter from the sea.

Then they rowed into one of these quiet bays where the water was always calm, and where there was no need to let down an anchor, or to tie the ship by ropes to the seashore, for the ship lay there quite still itself.

At the head of the bay a stream of fresh water trickled down from the cliffs, and ran close to the opening of a large cave ; and near the cave some willow trees drooped their branches over the stream, which ran down towards the sea.

So they made haste to go on shore ; and when they had landed, they saw fine large plains on which the corn might grow, but no one had taken the trouble to sow the seed ; and sloping hills for the grapes to ripen on the vines, but none were planted on them. And Odysseus thought that the people who lived there must be very strange, because they had no corn and no vines, and he could see no houses, but only sheep and goats feeding on the hillsides.

So he took his bow and arrows and shot many of the goats, and he and his men lay down on the ground and

had a merry meal, and drank the rich red wine which they had brought with them from the ship. And when they had finished eating and drinking they fell asleep, and did not wake up till the morning showed its bright rosy light in the eastern sky.

Then Odysseus said that he would take some of his men and go to see who lived on the island, while the others remained in the ship close to the seashore.

So they set out, and at last they came to the mouth of a great big cave, where many sheep and goats were penned up in large folds ; but they could see no one in the cave or anywhere near it ; and they waited a long while, but no one came. So they lit a fire, and made themselves merry, as they ate the cheese and drank the milk which was stored up round the sides of the cave.

Presently they heard a great noise of heavy feet stamping on the ground, and they were so frightened that they ran inside the cave, and crouched down at the end of it.

Nearer and nearer came the Cyclops, and his tread almost made the earth shake. At last in he came, with many dry logs of wood on his back ; and in came all the sheep, which he milked every evening ; but the rams and the goats stayed outside.

But if Odysseus and his men were afraid when they saw Polyphemus the Cyclops come in, they were much more afraid when he took up a great stone, which was almost as big as the mouth of the cave, and set it up against it for a door.

Then the men whispered to Odysseus, and said, “ Did we not beg and pray you not to come into the cave ? but you would not listen to us ; and now how are we to get out again ? why, two-and-twenty wagons would not be able to take away that huge stone from the mouth of the cave.” But they were shut in now, and there was no use in thinking of their folly for coming in.

So there they lay, crouching in the corner of the cave, and trembling with fear lest Polyphemus should see them. But the Cyclops went on milking all the sheep, and then he put the milk into the bowls round the sides of the cave, and lit the fire to cook his meal.

As the flame shot up from the burning wood to the roof of the cave, it showed him the forms of Odysseus and his companions, where they lay huddled together in the corner ; and he cried out to them with a loud voice, " Who are you that dare to come into the cave of Polyphemus ? are you come to rob me of my sheep, or my cheese and milk that I keep here ? "

Then Odysseus said, " Oh no, we are not come to do you any harm : we are Greeks who have been fighting at Troy to bring back Helen, whom Paris stole away from Sparta. We are on our way home to Ithaca, but Poseidon sent a great storm, because Athena was angry with me ; and almost all our ships have been sunk in the sea, or broken to pieces on the rocks."

When he had finished speaking, Polyphemus frowned savagely and said, " I know nothing of Paris or Helen ; " and he seized two of the men, and broke their heads against the stones, and devoured them for his dinner.

That day Polyphemus ate a huge meal, and drank several bowls full of milk ; and after that he fell fast asleep. Then, as he lay there snoring in his heavy sleep, Odysseus thought how easy it would be to plunge his sword into his breast and kill him ; and he was just going to do it when he thought of the great stone which Polyphemus had placed at the mouth of the cave ; and he knew that if Polyphemus were killed no one else could move away the stone, and so they would all die shut up in that dismal place.

So the hours of the night went slowly on, but neither Odysseus nor his friends could sleep, for they thought of the men whom Polyphemus had eaten, and how they would very likely be eaten up themselves.

At last they could tell, from the dim light which came in between the top of the stone and the roof of the cave, that the morning was come: and soon Polyphemus awoke, and milked the sheep again; and when he had done this, he went to the end of the cave and took two more men and devoured them.

Then he took down the great stone from the mouth of the cave, and drove all the cattle out to graze on the soft grass on the hills; and Odysseus began to hope that they might be able to get away before Polyphemus came back. But the Cyclops was not so silly as to let them go, for as soon as the cattle were gone out, he took up the big stone again as easily as if it had been a little pebble, and put it up against the mouth of the cave; and there were Odysseus and his friends shut up again as fast as ever.

Then Odysseus began to think more and more how they were to get away, for if they stayed there they would soon be all killed, if Polyphemus went on eating four of them every day.

At last, near the sheepfold, he saw a club of Polyphemus, which Polyphemus was going to use as a walking-stick. It was the whole trunk of an olive tree, fresh and green, for he had only just cut it and left it to dry, that he might carry it about when it was fit for use.

There it lay like the mast of a ship, which twenty men could hardly have lifted; and Odysseus cut off a bit from the end, as much as a man could carry, and told the men to bring it to a very sharp point; and when they had done this he hardened it in the fire, and then hid it away till Polyphemus should come home.

By-and-by, when the sun was sinking down, they heard the terrible tramp of his feet, and felt the earth shake beneath his tread. Then the great stone was taken down from the mouth of the cave, and in he came, driving the sheep and goats and the great rams before him, for this time he let nothing stay outside.

So he milked the sheep and the goats, as he had done the day before ; and then he killed two more men for his supper.

Then Odysseus went towards him with a bottle full of wine, and said, " Drink this wine, Polyphemus ; it will make your supper taste much nicer ; I have brought it to you, because I want you to do me some kindness in return." So the Cyclops stretched out his hand to take the wine, and he drank it off greedily and asked for more.

" Give me more of this honey-sweet wine," he said ; " surely no grapes on this earth could ever give such wine as this : tell me your name, for I should like to do you a kindness for giving me such wine as this."

Then Odysseus said, " O Cyclops, I hope you will not forget to give me what you have promised : my name is Nobody." And Polyphemus said, " Very well, I shall eat up Nobody last of all, when I have eaten up all his companions ; and this is the kindness which I mean to do for him."

But by this time he was so stupid with all that he had been eating and drinking that he could say no more, but fell on his back fast asleep ; and his heavy snoring sounded through the whole of the cave.

Then Odysseus cried to his friends, " Now is the time ; come and help me, and we will punish this Cyclops for all that he has done."

So he took the piece of the olive tree which had been made sharp, and put it into the fire, till it almost burst into a flame ; and then he and two of his men went and stood over Polyphemus, and pushed the burning wood into his great eye as hard and as far down as they could.

It was a terrible sight to see ; but the Cyclops was so stupid and heavy in sleep that at first he could scarcely stir ; but presently he gave a great groan, so that Odysseus and his people started back in a fright, and crouched down at the end of the cave : and then

the Cyclops put out his hand and drew the burning wood from his eye, and threw it from him in a rage, and roared out for help to his friends, who lived on the hills round about.

His roar was as deep and loud as the roar of twenty lions ; and the other Cyclopes wondered when they heard him shouting out so loud, and they said, “ What can be the matter with Polyphemus ? we never heard him make such a noise before : let us go and see if he wants any help.”

So they went to the cave, and stood outside the great stone which shut it in, listening to his terrible bellowings ; and when they did not stop, they shouted to him, and asked him what was the matter.

“ Why have you waked us up in the middle of the night with all this noise, when we were sleeping comfortably ? is any one taking away your sheep and goats, or killing you by craft and force ? ”

And Polyphemus said, “ Yes, my friends, Nobody is killing me by craft and force.”

When the others heard this they were angry, and said, “ Well, then, if nobody is killing you, why do you roar so ? if you are ill, you must bear it as best you can, and ask our father Poseidon to make you well again ; ” and then they walked off to their beds, and left Polyphemus to make as much noise as he pleased.

It was of no use that he went on shouting : no one came to him any more ; and Odysseus laughed because he had tricked him so cunningly by calling himself Nobody.

So Polyphemus got up at last, moaning and groaning with the dreadful pain, and he groped his way with his hands against the sides of the cave until he came to the door. Then he took down the great stone, and sat with his arms stretched out wide ; and he said to himself, “ Now I shall be sure to catch them, for no one can get out without passing me.”

But Odysseus was too clever for him yet ; for he went quietly and fastened the great rams of Polyphemus together with long bands of willow. . He tied them together by threes, and under the stomach of the middle one he tied one of his men, until he had fastened them all up safely.

Then he went and caught hold of the largest ram of all, and clung on with his hands to the thick wool underneath his stomach : and so they all waited in a great fright, lest after all the great giant might catch and kill them.

At last the pale light of the morning came into the eastern sky, and very soon the sheep and the goats began to go out of the cave. Then Polyphemus passed his hands over the backs of all the animals as they passed by, but he did not feel the willow bands, because their wool was long and thick, and he never thought that any one would be tied up underneath their stomachs.

Last of all came the great ram to which Odysseus was clinging : and when Polyphemus passed his hand over his back, he stroked him gently and said, " Well, old fellow, is there something the matter with you too, as there is with your master ? You were always the first to go out of the cave, and now to-day for the first time you are the last. I am sure that that horrible Nobody is at the bottom of all this. Ah, old ram, perhaps it is that you are sorry for your master, whose eye Nobody has put out.

" I wish you could speak like a man, and tell me where he is. If I could but catch him, I would take care that he never got away again, and then I should have some comfort for all the evil which Nobody has done to me."

So he sent the ram on ; and when he had gone a little way from the cave, Odysseus got up from under the ram, and went and untied all his friends. And very glad they were to be free once more ; but they

could not help crying when they thought of the men whom Polyphemus had killed.

But Odysseus told them to make haste and drive as many of the sheep and goats as they could to the ships. So they drove them down to the shore and hurried them into the ships, and began to row away: and soon they would have been out of the reach of the Cyclops, if Odysseus could only have held his tongue.

But he was so angry himself, that he thought he would like to make Polyphemus also still more angry; so he shouted to him, and said, "Oh, cruel Cyclops, did you think that you would not be punished for eating up my friends? Is this the way in which you receive strangers who have been tossed about by many storms upon the sea?"

Then Polyphemus was more furious than ever, and he broke off a great rock from the mountain, and hurled it at Odysseus. On it came whizzing through the air, and fell just in front of his ship, and the water was dashed up all over it; and there was a great heaving of the sea, which almost carried them back to the land.

Then they began to row again with all their might; but still, when they had got about twice as far as they were before, Odysseus could not help shouting out a few more words to Polyphemus. So he said, "If any one asks you how you lost your eye, remember, O Cyclops, to say that you were made blind by Odysseus, the plunderer of cities, who lives in Ithaca."

Terrible indeed was the fury of Polyphemus when he heard this, and he said, "Now I remember how a wise prophet used to tell me that a man would come here named Odysseus, who would put my eye out.

"But I thought he would have been some great strong man, almost as big as myself; and this is a miserable little wretch, whom I could almost hold in my hand if I caught him. But stay, Odysseus, and I will show you how I thank you for your kindness, and

I will ask my father Poseidon to send you a pleasant storm to toss you about upon the dark sea."

Then Polyphemus took up a bigger rock than ever, and hurled it high into the air with all his might. But this time it fell just behind the ship of Odysseus: up rose the water and drenched Odysseus and all his people, and almost sunk the ship under the sea.

But it only sent them further out of the reach of the Cyclops; and though he hurled more rocks after them, they now fell far behind in the sea and did them no harm.

But even when they had rowed a long way, they could still see Polyphemus standing on the high cliff, and shaking his hands at them in rage and pain. But no one came to help him for all his shouting, because he had told his friends that Nobody was doing him any harm.

Sir G. W. Cox.

The Good Samaritan

I

AND, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted Jesus, saying:

"Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

He said unto him, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"

And he answering said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."

And Jesus said unto him, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live."

But the lawyer, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

And Jesus answering said:

II

“ A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

“ And by chance there came down a certain priest that way ; and when he saw him he passed by on the other side.

“ And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

“ But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was : and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

“ And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, ‘ Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.’

“ Which now, of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves ? ”

And the lawyer said, “ He that showed mercy on him.”

Then said Jesus unto him, “ Go, and do thou likewise.”

New Testament : St. Luke.

The Light of Truth

“ DETESTABLE phantom ! ” cried the traveller, as his horse sank with him into the morass ; “ to what a miserable end have you lured me by your treacherous light ! ”

“ The same old story for ever ! ” muttered the Will-o'-the-Wisp in reply. “ Always throwing blame on

others for troubles you have brought upon yourself. What more could have been done for you, unhappy creature, than I have done? All the weary night through have I danced on the edge of this morass, to save you and others from ruin. If you have rushed in farther and farther, like a headstrong fool, in spite of my warning light, who is to blame but yourself?"

"I *am* an unhappy creature, indeed," rejoined the traveller: "I took your light for a friendly lamp, but have been deceived to my destruction."

"Yet not by *me*," cried the Will-o'-the-Wisp, anxiously. "I work out my appointed business carefully and ceaselessly. My light is ever a friendly lamp to the wise. It misleads none but the headstrong and ignorant."

"Headstrong! ignorant!" exclaimed the Statesman, for such the traveller was. "How little do you know to whom you are speaking! Trusted by my King—honoured by my country—the leader of her councils—ah, my country, my poor country, who will take my place and guide you when I am gone?"

"A guide who cannot guide himself! Misjudging, misled, and—though wise, perhaps, in the imperfect laws of society—ignorant in the glorious laws of Nature and of Truth—who will miss you, presumptuous being? You have mistaken the light that warned you of danger for the star that was to guide you to safety. Alas for your country, if no better leader than you can be found!"

The Statesman never spoke again, and the Will-o'-the-Wisp danced back to the edge of the black morass; and as he flickered up and down, he mourned his luckless fate—always trying to do good—so often vilified and misjudged. "Yet," said he to himself, as he sent out his beams through the cheerless night, "I will not cease to try; who knows but that I may save *somebody* yet! But what an ignorant world I live in!"

"Cruel monster!" shrieked the beautiful Girl in wild despair, as her feet plunged into the swamp, and she struggled in vain to find firmer ground, "you have betrayed me to my death!"

"Ay, ay, I said so! It is always some one else who is to blame, and never yourself, when pretty fools like you deceive themselves. You call me 'monster'—why did you follow a 'monster' into a swamp?" cried the poor Will-o'-the-Wisp angrily.

"I thought my betrothed had come out to meet me. I mistook your hateful light for his. Oh, cruel fiend, I know you now! Must I die so young, so fair? Must I be torn from life, and happiness, and love? Ay, dance! dance on in your savage joy."

"Fool as you are, it is no joy to me to see you perish," answered the Will-o'-the-Wisp. "It is my appointed law to warn and save those who will be warned. It is my appointed sorrow, I suppose, that the recklessness and ignorance of such as you persist in disregarding that law, and turning good into evil. I shone bright and brighter before you as you advanced, entreating you, as it were, to be warned. But, in wilfulness, you pursued me to your ruin. What cruel mother brought you up, and did not teach you to distinguish the steady beam that guides to happiness, from the wandering brilliancy that bodes destruction?"

"My poor mother!" wept the Maiden; "what words are these you speak of her? But you, in your savage life, know nothing of what she has done for me, her only child. Mistress of every accomplishment that can adorn and delight society, my lightest word, my very smile, is a law to the world we move in."

"Even so! Accomplished in fleeting and fantastic arts that leave no memorial behind them—unacquainted with the beauty and purposes of the realities around you, which work from age to age in silent mercy for gracious ends, and put to shame the

toil that has no aim or end. Oh that you had but known the law by which I live!"

The Maiden spoke no more, and then she ceased to struggle. The Will-o'-the-Wisp danced back yet another time to the edge of the black morass; "for," said he, "I may save somebody yet. But what a foolish world I live in!"

"The old Squire should mend these here roads," observed Hobbinoll the Farmer to his son Colin, as they drove slowly home from market in a crazy old cart which shook about with such jerks, that little Colin tried in vain to keep curled up in a corner. It was hard to say whether the fault was most in the roads,—though they were rather rutty, it must be owned,—or in the stumbling old pony who went from side to side, or in the not very sober driver, who seemed unable at times to distinguish the reins apart, so that he gave sudden pulls, first one way and then the other. But through all these troubles it comforted the Farmer's heart to lay all the blame on the Squire for the bad roads that led across the boggy moor. Colin, however, took but little interest in the matter; but at length, when a more violent jerk than usual threw him almost sprawling on the bottom of the cart, he jumped up, laid hold of the side planks, and began to look around him with his half-sleepy eyes, trying to find out where they were. At last he said, "She's coming, father."

"Who's coming?" shouted Hobbinoll.

"T' mother," answered Colin.

"What's she coming for, I wonder," said Hobbinoll; "we've enough in the cart without her."

"But you're going away from her, father," expostulated Colin, half crying. "I see her with the lanthorn, and she'll light us home. You can't see, father; let me have the reins." But Hobbinoll refused to give up the reins, though he was not very fit

to drive. In the struggle, however, he caught sight of the light which Colin took for his mother's lanthorn.

"And is *that* the fool's errand you'd be going after?" cried he, pointing with his whip to the light. "It's lucky for you, young one, you have not had the driving of us home to-night, though you think you can do anything, I know. A precious home it would have been at the bottom of the sludgy pool yonder, for that's where you'd have got us to at last. Yon light is the Will-o'-the-Wisp, that's always trying to mislead folks. Bad luck befall him! I got half-way to him once when I was a young 'un, but an old neighbour who'd once been in himself was going by just then, and called me back. He's a villain is that sham-faced Will-o'-the-Wisp."

With these words the Farmer struck the pony so harshly with his heavy whip, twitching the reins convulsively at the same time, at the mere memory of his adventure in the bog, that little Colin was thrown up and down like a ball, and the cart rolled forward in and out of the ruts at such a pace, that Hobbinoll got home to his wife sooner than she ever dared to hope for on market evenings.

"They are safe," observed the Will-o'-the-Wisp, as the cart moved on, "and that is the great point gained! Nevertheless, such wisdom is mere brute experience. In their ignorance they would have struck the hand that helped them. Nevertheless, I will try again, for I may yet save some one else. But what a rude and ungrateful world I live in!"

"I see a light at last, papa!" shouted a little Boy on a Shetland pony, as he rode by his Father's side along the moor. "I am so glad! There is either a cottage or a friendly man with a lanthorn who will help us to find our way. Let me go after him; I can soon overtake him." And the little boy touched his pony with a whip, and in another minute would have been

cantering along after the light, but that his Father laid a sudden and a heavy hand upon the bridle.

“Not a step farther in *that* direction, at any rate, if you please, my darling.”

“Oh, papa!” expostulated the child, pointing with his hand to the light.

And, “Oh, my son, I see!” cried the Father, smiling; “and well is it for you that I not only see, but know the meaning of what I see at the same time. That light is neither the gleam from a cottage, nor yet a friendly man with a lanthorn, as you think, though, for the matter of that, the light is friendly enough to those who understand it. It shines there to warn us from the dangerous part of the bog. Kind old Will-o'-the-Wisp!” pursued the Father, raising his voice, as if calling through the darkness into the distance—“Kind old Will-o'-the-Wisp, we know what you mean; we will not come near your deathly swamps. The old Naturalist knows you well—good-night, and thank you for the warning.” So saying, the Naturalist turned the reins of his son’s pony the other way, and they both trotted along, keeping the beaten road as well as they could by the imperfect light.

“After all, it was more like a lanthorn than those pictures of the nasty Will-o'-the-Wisp, papa,” murmured the little Boy, reluctantly urging his pony on.

“Our friend is not much indebted to you for the pretty name you have called him,” laughed the Father: “You are of the same mind as the poet, who, with the licence of his craft, said—

‘Yonder phantom only flies
To lure thee to thy doom.’”

“Yes, papa, and so he does,” interposed the Boy.

“But, indeed, he does no such thing, my dear,—on the contrary, he spends all his life in shining brightly to warn travellers of the most dangerous parts of the swamp.”

"But the shining seems as if he was inviting them to go after him, papa."

"Only because you choose to think so, my dear, and do not inquire. Does the sailor think the shining of the lighthouse invites him to approach the dangerous rocks on which it is built?"

"Oh no, papa, because he knows it is put there on purpose to warn him away."

"He only knows by teaching and inquiry, Arthur; and so you also by teaching and inquiry will learn to know that this Will-o'-the-Wisp is made to shine for us in swamps and marshes as a land-beacon of danger. The laws of Nature, which are the acted will of God, work together in this case, as in all others, for a good end. And it is given to us as both a privilege and a pleasure to search them out, and to avail ourselves of the mercies, whilst we admire the wonders of the great Creator. Can you think of a better employment?"

The fire was very bright, and the tea was warm and good, that greeted the travellers, Father and Son, on their arrival at home that night. Many a joke, too, passed with Mamma as to the sort of tea they should have tasted, and the kind of bed they should have lain down in, had they only gone after the Will-o'-the-Wisp, as young Arthur had so much wished to do.

And for just a few days after these events—not more, for children's wisdom seldom does, or ought to, last much longer—Arthur had every now and then a wise and philosophical fit, and on the principle that, however much appearances might be to the contrary, the laws of Nature were always working to some good and beneficent end, he sagely and gravely reproved his little sister for crying when a shower of hailstones fell; "for surely," said he, "though we cannot go out to-day, the storm is doing good to something or somebody somewhere."

It was a blessed creed! though it cost him a struggle to adhere to it, when the lightning flashed round him,

and the thunder roared in the distance, and he saw from the windows dark clouds hanging over the landscape. When some one said the storm had been very grand, he thought—yes, but it was grander still to think that all these laws of Nature, as they are called—this acted will of God—was for ever working night and day, in darkness and in light, recognized or unheeded, for some wise and beneficent end.

Yes! when he was older he would try and trace out these ends—a better employment could not be found. And it may be, that in long after years, when the storms and the clouds that gathered round him were harder yet to look through, because they were mental troubles—it may be, that then, from amidst the tender recollections of his infancy, the gleaming of the Will-o'-the-Wisp would suddenly rise and shine before him with comfort. For the Student of Nature who had traced so many blessed ends out of dark and mysterious beginnings, held fast to the humility and faith of childhood; and where his mind was unable to penetrate, his heart was contented to believe.

Meanwhile the Will-o'-the-Wisp had heard the kind good-night that greeted him as the travellers passed by on that dark evening. And his light shone brighter than ever, as he said, "I am happy now. I have saved the life of one who not only is thankful for it, but knows the hand that saved him." With these words he cheerily danced back again to his appointed post.

Mrs. GATTY: *Parables from Nature.*

The Weeds

IT was a beautiful fruitful season. Rain and sunshine came by turns just as it was best for the corn. As soon as ever the farmer began to think that things

were rather dry, you might depend upon it that next day it would rain. And when he thought that there had been rain enough, the clouds broke at once, just as if they were under his command.

So the farmer was in a good humour, and he did not grumble, as he usually does. He looked pleased and cheerful as he walked over the field with his two boys.

"It will be a splendid harvest this year," he said. "I shall have my barns full, and shall make much profit. And then Jack and Will shall have some new trousers, and I'll let them come with me to market."

"If you don't cut me soon, farmer, I shall sprawl on the ground," said the rye, and she bowed her heavy ear quite down towards the earth.

The farmer could not hear her talking, but he could see what was in her mind, and so he went home to fetch his scythe.

"It is a good thing to be in the service of man," said the rye. "I can be quite sure that all my grain will be well cared for. Most of it will go to the mill: not that being ground is so very enjoyable, but in that way it will be made into beautiful new bread, and one must put up with something for the sake of honour. The rest the farmer will save, and sow next year in his field."

At the side of the field, along the hedge, and on the bank above the ditch, stood the weeds. There were dense clumps of them—thistle and burdock, poppy and harebell, and dandelion; and all their heads were full of seed. It had been a fruitful year for them also, for the sun shines and the rain falls just as much on the poor weed as on the rich corn.

"No one comes and mows *us* down and carries us to a barn," said the dandelion, and he shook his head, but very cautiously, so that the seeds should not fall before their time. "But what will become of all our children?"

"It gives me a headache to think about it," said

the poppy. "Here I stand with hundreds and hundreds of seeds in my head, and I haven't the faintest idea where I shall drop them."

"Let us ask the rye to advise us," answered the burdock.

And so they asked the rye what they should do.

"When one is well off, one had better not meddle with other people's business," answered the rye. "I will only give you one piece of advice: take care you don't throw your stupid seed on to the field, for then you will have to settle accounts with *me*."

This advice did not help the wild flowers at all, and the whole day they stood pondering what they should do. When the sun set they shut up their petals and went to sleep; but the whole night through they were dreaming about their seed, and next morning they had found a plan.

The poppy was the first to wake. She cautiously opened some little trap-doors at the top of her head, so that the sun could shine right in on the seeds. Then she called to the morning breeze, who was running and playing along the hedge.

"Little breeze," she said, in friendly tones, "will you do me a service?"

"Yes, indeed," said the breeze. "I shall be glad to have something to do."

"It is the merest trifle," said the poppy. "All I want of you is to give a good shake to my stalk, so that my seeds may fly out of the trap-doors."

"All right," said the breeze.

And the seeds flew out in all directions. The stalk snapped, it is true; but the poppy did not mind about that, for when one has provided for one's children, one has really nothing more to do in the world.

"Good-bye," said the breeze, and would have run on farther.

"Wait a moment," said the poppy. "Promise me first that you will not tell the others, else they might

get hold of the same idea, and then there would be less room for my seeds."

"I am mute as the grave," answered the breeze, running off.

"Ho! ho!" said the harebell. "Haven't you time to do me a little, tiny service?"

"Well," said the breeze, "what is it?"

"I merely wanted to ask you to give me a little shake," said the harebell. "I have opened some trap-doors in my head, and I should like to have my seed sent a good way off into the world. But you mustn't tell the others, or else they might think of doing the same thing."

"Oh! of course not," said the breeze, laughing. "I shall be as dumb as a stone wall." And then she gave the flower a good shake and went on her way.

"Little breeze, little breeze," called the dandelion, "whither away so fast?"

"Is there anything the matter with you too?" asked the breeze.

"Nothing at all," answered the dandelion. "Only I should like a few words with you."

"Be quick then," said the breeze, "for I am thinking seriously of lying down and having a rest."

"You cannot help seeing," said the dandelion, "what a fix we are in this year to get all our seeds put out in the world; for, of course, one wishes to do what one can for one's children. What is to happen to the harebell and the poppy and the poor burdock I really don't know. But the thistle and I have put our heads together, and we have hit on a plan. Only we must have you to help us."

"That makes *four* of them," thought the breeze, and could not help laughing out loud.

"What are you laughing at?" asked the dandelion. "I saw you whispering just now to the harebell and poppy; but if you breathe a word to them, I won't tell you anything."

"Why, of course not," said the breeze. "I am mute as a fish. What is it you want?"

"We have set up a pretty little umbrella on the top of our seeds. It is the sweetest little plaything imaginable. If you will only blow a little on me, the seeds will fly into the air and fall down wherever you please. Will you do so?"

"Certainly," said the breeze.

And ush ! it went over the thistle and the dandelion and carried all the seeds with it into the cornfield.

The burdock still stood and pondered. Its head was rather thick, and that was why it waited so long. But in the evening a hare leapt over the hedge.

"Hide me ! Save me ! " he cried. "The farmer's dog Trusty is after me."

"You can creep behind the hedge," said the burdock, "then I will hide you."

"You don't seem to me to be able to do all you promise," said the hare, "but in time of need one must help oneself as one can." And so he crept in safety behind the hedge.

"Now you may repay me by taking some of my seeds with you over into the cornfield," said the burdock ; and it broke off some of its many heads and fixed them on the hare.

A little later Trusty came trotting up to the hedge.

"Here's the dog," whispered the burdock, and with one spring the hare leapt over the hedge and into the rye.

"Haven't you seen the hare, burdock ? " asked Trusty. "I see I have got too old to go hunting. I am quite blind in one eye, and I have completely lost my scent."

"Yes, I have seen him," answered the burdock ; "and if you will do me a service, I will show you where he is."

Trusty agreed, and the burdock fastened some heads on his back, and said to him :

"If you will only rub yourself against the stile there in the cornfield, my seeds will fall off. But you must not look for the hare there, for a little while ago I saw him run into the wood."

Trusty dropped the burs on the field and trotted to the wood.

"Well, I've got *my* seeds put out in the world all right," said the burdock, and laughed as if much pleased with itself; "but it is impossible to say what will become of the thistle and the dandelion, and the harebell and the poppy."

Spring had come round once more, and the rye stood high already.

"We are pretty well off on the whole," said the rye plants. "Here we stand in a great company, and not one of us but belongs to our own noble family. And we don't get in each other's way in the very least. It is a grand thing to be in the service of man."

But one fine day a crowd of little poppies, and thistles and dandelions, and burdocks and harebells poked up their heads above ground, all among the flourishing rye.

"What does *this* mean?" asked the rye. "Where in the world are *you* sprung from?"

And the poppy looked at the harebell and asked, "Where do *you* come from?"

And the thistle looked at the burdock and asked, "Where in the world have *you* come from?"

They were all equally astonished, and it was an hour before they had explained. But the rye was the angriest, and when she had heard all about Trusty and the hare and the breeze she grew quite wild.

"Thank heaven, the farmer shot the hare last autumn," she said; "and Trusty, fortunately, is also dead, the old scamp. So I am at peace, as far as *they* are concerned. But how dare the breeze promise to drop the seeds of the weeds in the farmer's cornfield?"

"Don't be in such a passion, you green rye," said the breeze, who had been lying behind the hedge and hearing everything. "I ask no one's permission, but do as I like; and now I'm going to make you bow to me."

Then she passed over the young rye, and the thin blades swayed backwards and forwards.

"You see," she said, "the farmer attends to his rye, because that is *his* business. But the rain and the sun and I—we attend to all of you without respect of persons. To our eyes the poor weed is just as pretty as the rich corn."

The farmer now came out to look at his rye, and when he saw the weeds in the cornfield he scratched his head with vexation and began to growl.

"It's that silly wind that has done this," he said to Jack and Will, as they stood by his side with their hands in the pockets of their new trousers.

But the breeze flew towards them and knocked all their hats off their heads, and rolled them far away to the road. The farmer and the two boys ran after them, but the wind ran faster than they did.

It finished up by rolling the hats into the village pond, and the farmer and the boys had to stand a long time fishing for them before they got them out.

CARL EWALD.

(Translated by Prof. G. E. Moore-Smith.)

King Arthur's Last Battle

THEN were they condescended that King Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and every each of them should bring fourteen persons. And they came with this word unto Arthur.

Then said he, I am glad that this is done. And so he went into the field.

And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his

host that an they see any sword drawn, Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him. In like wise Sir Mordred warned his host that, An ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth: for in no wise I will not trust for this treaty: for I know well my uncle will be avenged upon me.

And so they met as their pointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly: and wine was fetched, and they drank.

Right so came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they blew beames, trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together.

And King Arthur took his horse, and said, Alas, this unhappy day, and so rode to his party: and Sir Mordred in likewise.

And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in Christian land. For there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever King Arthur rode throughout the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should; and at all times he fainted never.

And Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir, and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted, till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth, and ever they fought still, till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down.

Then was Arthur wood wroth out of measure, when

An, If.

Put him in devoir,

Beame, A kind of trumpet.

Fought strenuously.

Wood, Madly.

he saw his people so slain from him. Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware of all his host, and of all his good knights, were left no more on live but two knights, that was Sir Lucan de Butlere, and his brother Sir Bedivere: and they were full sore wounded.

Jesu mercy, said the king, where are all my noble knights become? Alas, that ever I should see this doleful day. For now, said Arthur, I am come to mine end. But would to God that I wist where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief.

Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. Now give me my spear, said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought.

Sir, let him be, said Sir Lucan, for he is unhappy: and if ye pass this unhappy day, ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this. For blessed be God, ye have won the field: for here we be three on live, and with Sir Mordred is none on live. And if ye leave off now, this wicked day of destiny is past.

Tide me death, betide me life, saith the king, now I see him yonder alone, he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him.

God speed you well, said Sir Bedivere. Then the king got his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying, Traitor, now is thy death-day come!

And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear throughout the body more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death's wound, he thrust himself, with the might that he had, up to the bur of King Arthur's spear.

And right so he smote Arthur with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brain-pan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth.

And the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned oft-times. And Sir Lucan de Butlere and Sir Bedivere oft-times heaved him up.

And so weakly they led him betwixt them both to a little chapel not far from the sea side. And when the king was there, he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field.

Now go thou, Sir Lucan, said the king, and do me to wit what betokens that noise in the field. So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede, he saw and hearkened by the moon-light how the pillers and robbers were come into the field to pill and to rob many a full noble knight of broaches and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel ; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches.

When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. Therefore by my rede, said Sir Lucan, it is best that we bring you to some town. I would it were so, said the king.

But I may not stand, my head works so. Ah, Sir Launcelot, said King Arthur, this day have I sore missed thee. Alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death.

Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned, and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift . . . and therewith the noble knight's heart brast.

And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan how he lay foaming at the mouth. . . . Alas, said the king,

this is to me a full heavy sight to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me that had more need of help than I.

Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me. Now Jesu have mercy upon his soul.

Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. Leave this mourning and weeping, said the king, for all this will not avail me: for, wit thou well, an I might live myself the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast, said the king.

Therefore, said Arthur to Sir Bedivere, take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there, I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again, and tell me what thou there seest.

My lord, said Bedivere, your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again. So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones, and then he said to himself, if I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss. And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree.

And so as soon as he might he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water.

What saw thou there? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but waves and winds.

That is untruly said of thee, said the king; therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment, as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in.

Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword; and so eft he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment.

What saw thou there ? said the king. Sir, he said, I saw nothing but the waters wappe, and the waves wanne.

Ah, traitor untrue, said King Arthur, now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that thou that hast been to me so lief and dear, and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword.

But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands, for thou wouldest for my rich sword see me dead.

Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword and lightly took it up, and went to the water side, and there he bound the girdle about the hilt, and then he threw the sword as far into the water as he might, and there came an arm and an hand above the water, and met it and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water.

So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw.

Alas, said the king, help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long. Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side.

And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge, with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur.

Now put me into the barge, said the king ; and so he did softly. And there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head.

And then that queen said, Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me ? Alas, this wound on your head hath caught over much cold. And so then they rowed from the land ; and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him.

Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies ?

Comfort thyself, said the king, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will into the vale of Avilion, to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul.

But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest.

MALORY'S *Morte d'Arthur*.

The Story of Augustine

IN the year of our Lord's Incarnation 582, Mauritius became Emperor of Rome, and reigned twenty-one years. In the tenth year of his reign Gregory, a man renowned for learning and piety, was made Pope. In the fourteenth year of the same emperor, and about the one hundred and fiftieth year after the coming of the English into Britain, Gregory sent the servant of God, St. Augustine, and with him certain other monks, to preach the Word of God to the English nation.

This is the account which has been handed down by the tradition of our elders and ancestors, in relation to Gregory's motives for taking such an interest in the conversion of our nation.

Some merchants, having arrived at Rome on a certain day, exposed many things for sale in the

market-place, and many people came thither to buy. Gregory himself went with the rest, and among other things saw some boys set for sale—their skins white, their countenances beautiful, and their hair very fair.

He asked, it is said, from what country or land they were brought, and was told that they came from the island of Britain, whose inhabitants were all of such fair complexions. He then asked whether the people of that island were Christians, and was told they were pagans.

“Alas!” said he, sighing deeply, “what a pity that the author of darkness should possess men of such fair countenances; and that, being remarkable for such graceful appearances, they should be devoid of inward grace.”

Again, therefore, he inquired what was the name of their nation, and was told that they were called Angles.

“Truly,” said he, “not without cause are they called Angles; for they have angels’ faces, and it is right that such men should be partakers with the angels in heaven.”

“What is the name,” continued he, “of the province from which they are brought?”

The merchants replied that they were natives of the province of Deiri.

“Truly they are *De ira*,” said he, “for they shall be withdrawn from the ire [wrath] of God, and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that province called?”

They told him his name was Ella, and St. Gregory, alluding to it, said, “Alleluia, the praise of God the Creator must be sung in those parts.”

He then went to the Pope, and besought him to send preachers to the nation of the English, declaring himself ready to undertake that work. Though the Pope was willing to grant his request, yet the people of

Jesus Christ, they sang this Litany : “ We beseech thee, O Lord, in Thy great mercy, that Thy anger and wrath may be turned away from this city, and from Thy Holy House.”

As soon as they had entered the dwelling-place set apart for them, they began to imitate the kind of life practised in the early Church ; praying, watching, and fasting ; preaching the word of life to as many as they could ; despising all worldly things ; receiving only their necessary food from those they taught ; living in all respects in accordance with what they taught to others ; and being always willing to suffer any adversity, and even die, for that truth which they preached. As a result of this many believed and were baptized, admiring the simple, innocent life they led, and the sweetness of their teaching.

There was on the east side of the city a church, dedicated to the honour of St. Martin, which had been built whilst the Romans still dwelt in the island, wherein the queen (who, as has been said, was a Christian) used to pray. In this they first began to meet to sing the services, to pray, to say Mass, to preach, and to baptize, till the king, being converted to the faith, allowed them to preach openly, and to build new or repair old churches in any part of his kingdom.

But when he, among the rest, believed and was baptized, greater numbers began daily to flock together to hear the Word, and, forsaking their heathen rites, joined themselves to the Church of Christ. Nor was it long before Ethelbert gave his teachers a settled residence in Canterbury, and such possessions as were necessary for their maintenance.

BEDE'S History of the English Church.

Legend and History

i. King Alfred and the Old Book

ALFRED—or, as his name should really be spelt, *Ælfred*¹—was the youngest son of King *Æthelwulf*, and was born at Wantage, in Berkshire, in 849. His mother was Osburh, the first, or perhaps the second, wife of *Æthelwulf*.

Now a story is told of Alfred and his mother which you may perhaps have heard already, and which is such a beautiful tale that I am really sorry to have to say that it cannot possibly be true.

We are told that up to the age of twelve years Alfred was fond of hunting and other sports, but that he had not been taught any sort of learning—not so much as to read his own tongue.

But he loved the Old English songs ; and one day his mother had a beautiful book of songs with rich pictures and fine painted initial letters, such as you may often see in ancient books. And she said to her children, “ I will give this beautiful book to the one of you who shall first be able to read it.”

And Alfred said, “ Mother, will you really give me the book when I have learned to read it ? ” And Osburh said, “ Yea, my son.” So Alfred went and found a master, and soon learned to read. Then he came to his mother, and read the songs in the beautiful book, and took the book for his own.

Now it is a great pity that so pretty a story cannot be true. And I must tell you why it cannot. Alfred was sent to Rome to the Pope when he was four years old ; and if the Pope took him as his “ *bishop-son* ” and anointed him to be king, one cannot help thinking that he would have him taught to read and to learn Latin.

¹ That is, the *rede* or counsel of the *elves*. A great many Old English people were called after the *elves* or *fairies*.—Author.

And it is quite certain that he could do both very well in after-life.

Still this is not quite certain proof, as he might have learned afterwards. But this is *quite* certain. Alfred was not twelve years old till 861. By that time his brothers were not children playing round their mother, but grown men and kings, and two of them, Æthelstan and Æthelbald, were dead. Moreover, in 861, Alfred's father, Æthelwulf, was dead, and his mother must have been dead also, as Æthelwulf married Judith in 856, when Alfred was only seven years old.

If, then, anything of the kind happened, it could not have been when Alfred was twelve years old, but before he was four. For in that year he went to Rome, and could never have seen his mother again, even if she were alive when he went. And for a child of four years old not to be able to read is not so very wonderful a thing, even in our own time.

2. The Story of the Cakes

The terrible year 878 was the greatest and saddest and most glorious in all Alfred's life. In the very beginning of the year, just after Twelfth Night, the Danish host again came suddenly—"bestole" as the Chronicle says—to Chippenham. Then "they rode through the West Saxons' land, and there sat down, and mickle of the folk over sea they drove, and of the others the most deal they rode over; all but the King Alfred; he, with a little band, hardly fared [went] after the woods and on the moor-fastnesses." How can I tell you this better than in the words of the Chronicle itself, only altering some words into their modern shape, that you may the better understand them?

It must have been at this time that the story of the cakes, which I daresay you have heard, happened—if it ever happened at all. The tale is quite possible, but

there is no proof of it being true. It is said that Alfred went and stayed in the hut of a neatherd or swineherd of his, who knew who he was, though his wife did not know him.

One day the woman set some cakes to bake, and bade the king, who was sitting by the fire mending his bow and arrows, to tend them. Alfred thought more of his bow and arrows than he did of the cakes, and let them burn. Then the woman ran in, and cried out, "There, don't you see the cakes on fire? Then wherefore turn them not? You're glad enough to eat them when they are piping hot!"

It is almost more strange when we are told by some that this swineherd or neatherd¹ afterwards became Bishop of Winchester. They say that his name was Denewulf, and that the king saw that, though he was in so lowly a rank, he was naturally a very wise man. So he had him taught, and at last gave him the bishopric. But it is hard to believe this, especially as Denewulf, Bishop of Winchester, became bishop the very next year.

3. More Tales of King Alfred

It shows how much people always remembered and thought of Alfred, that there should be so many more stories told of him than of almost any other of the old kings. One story is that Alfred, wishing to know what the Danes were about, and how strong they were, set out one day from Athelney in the disguise of a minstrel or juggler, and went into the Danish camp, and stayed there several days, amusing the Danes with his playing, till he had seen all that he wanted, and then went back without any one finding him out.

¹ The story that Alfred took shelter in a herdsman's cottage is one story, and the story that Bishop Denewulf had been a swineherd is another story. But people have very naturally put the two stories together, and have thought that Denewulf was the same man in whose hut the cake-story happened. But no old writer distinctly says so, and indeed the two stories come from different writers.

Now there is actually nothing impossible in this story, but we do not find it in any writer earlier than William of Malmesbury, who lived in the twelfth century. And it is the sort of story which one finds turning up in different forms in different ages and countries. For instance, exactly the same story is told of a Danish king Anlaf. So it is one of those things which you cannot at all believe for certain.

This is what you may call a soldier's story, while some of the others are rather what monks and clergymen would like to tell. Thus there is a tale which is told in a great many different ways, but of which the following is the oldest shape.

*The Story of King Alfred and Saint Cuthberht*¹

Now King Alfred was driven from his kingdom by the Danes, and he lay hid for three years in the isle of Glastonbury.² And it came to pass on a day that all his folk were gone out to fish, save only Alfred himself and his wife, and one servant whom he loved.

And there came a pilgrim³ to the king, and begged for food. And the king said to his servant, "What food have we in the house?" And his servant

¹ I have seen in many books so much of this story told as people nowadays think possible—namely, the story of Alfred's charity to the poor man. Now it is quite possible that this may be true, and that the rest is an addition which has grown round about it. But we have no evidence that it is so, and we have no right to take a piece of a story by itself in this way. The writers who tell us one part tell us the rest, and if we tell the story at all, we should tell the whole story. I therefore tell it simply as a legend, found only in writers who wrote long after the time. Some of it may be true; but it is not fair to pick out just so much as we think possible, and to tell that much as if it were certainly true.

² Here you will at once see two mistakes. Alfred was not hid for three years, and it was not at Glastonbury that he was hid. But the *Life of Saint Cuthbert*, from which the story comes, was written in the north of England, and there they had no doubt heard of so famous a place as Glastonbury, but knew nothing of Athelney.

³ The writer, by speaking of a pilgrim, clearly shows that he was thinking of Glastonbury rather than of Athelney, as there was no monastery at Athelney at that time.

answered, " My lord, we have but one loaf and a little wine." Then the king gave thanks to God, and said, " Give half of the loaf and half of the wine to this poor pilgrim."

So the servant did as his lord commanded him, and gave to the pilgrim half of the loaf and half of the wine, and the pilgrim gave great thanks to the king. And when the servant returned, he found the loaf whole, and the wine as much as there had been aforetime. And he greatly wondered, and he wondered also how the pilgrim had come into the isle, for that no man could come there save by water, and the pilgrim had no boat. And the king greatly wondered also.

And at the ninth hour came back the folk who had gone to fish. And they had three boats full of fish, and they said, " Lo, we have caught more fish this day than in all the three years that we have tarried in this island." And the king was glad, and he and his folk were merry ; yet he pondered much upon that which had come to pass.

And when night came, the king went to his bed with Ealhswith his wife. And the lady slept, but the king lay awake and thought of all that had come to pass by day. And presently he saw a great light, like the brightness of the sun, and he saw an old man with black hair, clothed in priest's garments, and with a mitre on his head, and holding in his right hand a book of the Gospels adorned with gold and gems. And the old man blessed the king, and the king said unto him, " Who art thou ? "

And he answered, " Alfred, my son, rejoice ; for I am he to whom thou didst this day give thine alms, and I am called Cuthberht the soldier of Christ. Now be strong and very courageous, and be of joyful heart, and hearken diligently to the things which I say unto thee ; for henceforth I will be thy shield and thy friend, and I will watch over thee and over thy sons after thee.

“ And now I will tell thee what thou must do. Rise up early in the morning, and blow thine horn thrice, that thine enemies may hear it and fear, and by the ninth hour thou shalt have around thee five hundred men harnessed for the battle. And this shall be a sign unto thee that thou mayest believe. And after seven days thou shalt have by God’s gift and my help all the folk of this land gathered unto thee upon the mount that is called Assandum.¹

“ And thus shalt thou fight against thine enemies, and doubt not that thou shalt overcome them. Be thou therefore glad of heart, and be strong and very courageous, and fear not, for God hath given thine enemies into thine hand. And He hath given thee also all this land and the kingdom of thy fathers, to thee and to thy sons, and to thy sons’ sons after thee.

“ Be thou faithful to me and to my folk, because that unto thee is given all the land of Albion. Be thou righteous, because thou art chosen to be the King of all Britain. So may God be merciful unto thee, and I will be thy friend, and none of thine enemies shall ever be able to overcome thee.”

Then was King Alfred glad at heart, and he was strong and very courageous, for that he knew that he would overcome his enemies by the help of God and Saint Cuthberht his patron. So in the morning he arose, and sailed to the land, and blew his horn three times ; and when his friends heard it they rejoiced, and when his enemies heard it they feared.

And by the ninth hour, according to the word of the Lord, there were gathered unto him five hundred men of the bravest and dearest of his friends. And he spake unto them, and told them all that God had said unto them by the mouth of His servant Cuthberht ;

¹ The writer evidently confounds *Ethandun* (Edington), the place of Alfred’s victory, with *Ascesdun* (Ashdown), where one of Æthelred’s battles was fought, and perhaps with the real Assandum where the great battle was long after in 1016.

and he told them that, by the gift of God and by the help of Saint Cuthberht, they would overcome their enemies and win back their own land. And he bade them, as Saint Cuthberht had taught him, to be pious towards God and righteous towards men. And he bade his son Edward, who was by him, to be faithful to God and Saint Cuthberht, and so he should always have the victory over his enemies. So they went forth to battle, and smote their enemies, and overcame them ; and King Alfred took the kingdom of all Britain,¹ and he ruled well and wisely over the just and the unjust for the rest of his days.

Now is there any truth in all this story ? I think there is this much, that Alfred, for some reason or other, thought he was under the special protection of Saint Cuthbert. I have two reasons for thinking so : first, because it is rather remarkable that a Northumbrian writer should go out of his way to tell so long a story about a West Saxon king, unless he really had something to do with his own saint ; and secondly, is not our parish church in Wells called Saint Cuthbert's ?

Now it is not often that we find a church in the south called after a saint who is hardly known except in the north. There must be some special reason for it ; and if, when Alfred was in Somersetshire, any dream or anything else made him think that Saint Cuthbert was helping him, we can understand why either he or other men after him should call a church in that neighbourhood by the name of a saint whom otherwise they were not likely to know much about.

Professor E. A. FREEMAN :
Old English History for Children.

¹ The writer seems to have had very little notion of the division of the land between Alfred and Guthorm or Guthrum.

The Story of Wat Tyler

WAT TYLER, Jack Straw, and John Ball had assembled their company together in a place called Smithfield, where every Friday there is a market of horses, and there were more than twenty thousand ; though there were many still in the town, drinking and making merry though paying for nothing, for they were happy that made them best cheer.

These people in Smithfield had with them the king's banners, which were delivered to them the day before. Now all these gluttons were of one mind to overrun and rob London that same day ; for their captains said they had done nothing as yet.

"These liberties that the king hath given us," said they, "are but of small profit to us. Let us all be of one accord, and let us overrun this rich and powerful city ere they of Essex, Norwich, Reading, Oxford, Guildford, Lynn, Stafford, Yarmouth, Lincoln, York, and Durham do come hither. For all these will come hither, Baker and Lister will bring them, but if we be first lords of London, and have possession of the riches that are therein, we shall not repent ; but if we leave it, they that come after will have it from us."

To this counsel they all agreed ; and therewith the king came that way, unaware of them, for he had thought to have passed that way out of London ; and with him were forty horse. When he came before the abbey of St. Bartholomew, and beheld all these people, then the king stopped, and said he would go no farther till he knew what ailed these people, saying, if they were in trouble he would again appease them. The lords that were with him tarried also, when they saw the king tarry.

When Wat Tyler saw the king tarry, he said to his people, "Sirs, yonder is the king, I will go and speak with him. Stir not far hence unless I make you a sign,

and when I make you that sign, come on and slay all of them except the king. But do the king no hurt ; he is young, and we shall do with him as we list, and shall lead him with us all about England ; so shall we be lords of the realm without a doubt."

Now there was a doublet-maker of London, called John Tycle, and he had brought these ghittons forty doublets, which they wore ; then he asked of these captains who should pay him for his doublets ; he demanded thirty marks. Wat Tyler answered him and said, " Friend, appease yourself, thou shalt be well paid ere this day be ended ; keep thee near me, I will be thy surety." Therewith he spurred his horse and departed from the company, and came to the king, so near him that his horse's head touched the croup of the king's horse.

The first word he said was, " Sir King, seest thou all yonder people ? "

" Yes, truly," said the king. " Wherefore askest thou ? "

" Because," said he, " they be all at my command, and have sworn to me faith and truth, to do all that I will have them do."

" In a good time," said the king, " I should be well pleased it should be so."

Then Wat Tyler said, for he nothing desired but riot, " What, believest thou, king, that these people, and as many more as be in London at my command, will depart from thee thus without having thy letters ? "

" No," said the king, " ye shall have them, they be ordained for you and shall be delivered every one in turn ; wherefore, good fellows, withdraw fair and easily to your people, and cause them to depart out of London ; for it is our purpose that each of you, by villages and townships, shall have the letters, as I have promised you."

At these words Wat Tyler cast his eyes upon a squire who was there with the king, bearing the king's

sword ; and Wat Tyler hated greatly that same squire, for the same squire had displeased him before.

“ What,” said Tyler, “ art thou here ? Give me thy dagger.”

“ Nay,” said the squire, “ that I will not do. Wherefore should I give it thee ? ”

The king looked at the squire and said, “ Give it him ; let him have it.” So the squire took it to him, sorely against his will.

When Wat Tyler had it he began to play with it, and turned it in his hand, and said again, “ Give me thy sword.”

“ Nay,” said the squire, “ it is the king’s sword. Thou art but a knave, and if there were no more here than thou and I, thou durst not speak those words for as much gold as all yonder abbey.”

“ By my faith,” said Wat Tyler, “ I will never eat food till I have thy head.”

At these words the Mayor of London came to the king with twelve horse, well armed under their coats, and he brake through the press and saw and heard how Wat Tyler conducted himself.

He said to him, “ Ha ! thou knave, how is it that thou art so bold in the king’s presence to speak such words ? It is too much for thee to do so.”

Then the king began to grow impatient, and said, “ Set hands on him.”

When the king said this, Tyler said to the Mayor, “ In God’s name, have I said ought to displease thee ? ”

“ Yes, truly,” quoth the Mayor, “ thou false knave. Shalt thou speak thus in the presence of the king, my natural lord ? I desire not to live unless thou shalt dearly pay for it.”

With these words the Mayor drew out his sword, and struck Tyler so great a blow on the head that he fell down at the feet of his horse. Now as soon as he was fallen, they surrounded him, so that he was not

seen of his company. Then a squire of the king, called John Standish, alighted, drew out his sword, and thrust it into Wat Tyler so that he died.

Then the ungracious people there, perceiving their captain slain, began to murmur among themselves, and said, "Ah, our captain is slain—let us go and slay them all."

Therewith they arranged themselves on the place in the manner of battle, with their bows before them. Then the king did a great deed of daring, howbeit all turned out for the best. For as soon as Tyler was on the ground, the king departed from all his company, and, all alone, he rode to those people ; and said to his own people, "Sirs, none of you follow me, let me go alone."

When he came before these ungracious people, who put themselves in order to revenge their captain, the king said, "Sirs, what aileth you ? Ye shall have no captain but me : I am your king ; be all of you in rest and peace."

So most of the people who heard the king speak, and saw him among them, were shamefaced, and began to grow peaceable and to depart. But some, such as were malicious and evil, would not depart, but made as though they would do somewhat.

Then the king returned to his own company, and asked of them what was best to be done. Then he was counselled to withdraw into the field ; for to fly away was no gain.

The Mayor said, "It is good that we do so, for I think surely we shall shortly have some comfort of the people of London, who are prepared and have their friends and servants ready armed in their houses."

In the meantime rumour ran through London that these unhappy people were likely to slay the king and the Mayor in Smithfield. Because of this rumour all manner of good men of the king's party issued out

of their houses and lodgings well armed, and so came all to Smithfield, and to the field where the king was, and they were to the number of seven or eight thousand men well armed.

First thither came Sir Richard Knolles and Sir Perduccas d'Albert well accompanied, and many of the Aldermen of London, and with them six hundred men in armour. A powerful man of the city, who was the king's draper, called Nicholas Bramber, brought with him a great company, and ever as they came they ranged themselves afoot in order of battle. On the other side these unhappy people were ready ranged to give battle, and they had with them many of the king's banners.

Then the lords said among themselves, "What shall we do? We see here our enemies who would gladly slay us, if they might have the upper hand of us."

Sir Richard Knolles advised to go and fight with them and slay them all. The king would not consent thereto, but said, "Nay, I will not so do; I will send to them, commanding them to return again my banners, and thus we shall see what they intend to do. But, either by fairness or otherwise, I will have them."

"That is well said," quoth the Earl of Salisbury.

Then three knights were sent to them, and they made signs to the people not to shoot; and when they came so near them that their speech might be heard, they said, "Sirs, the king commandeth you to return his banners, and we think he will have mercy on you." So they delivered again the banners, and sent them to the king.

They were also commanded, on pain of losing their heads, that all such as had letters of the king should bring them forth, and send them again to the king. So many delivered up their letters, but not all. Then the king caused them all to be torn in his presence; and as soon as the king's banners were delivered again

these unhappy people cast down their bows, brake their array, and returned to London.

Sir Richard Knolles was sore displeased because he might not go to slay them all ; but the king said he would be revenged on them well enough ; and so he was afterwards.

Thus these foolish people departed, some one way and some another, and the king, and his lords and all his company, entered into London with great joy.

The first journey the king made was to the princess, his mother, who was in a castle called the Queen's Wardrobe ; and there she had tarried two days and two nights sore dismayed, as she had good reason. When she saw the king, her son, she was greatly rejoiced, and said, “Ah, fair son, what pain and great sorrow I have suffered for you this day.”

Then the king answered and said, “Certainly, madam, I know it well ; but now rejoice and thank God, for now it is time. I have this day recovered mine heritage, and the realm of England, which I had near lost.”

Thus the king tarried that day with his mother, and every lord went peaceably to his own lodgings.

Then was a proclamation made in every street in the king's name, that all manner of men, not being of the city of London, and not having dwelt there the space of one year, should depart, and if any such should be found there on Sunday by the sun-rising, they should be taken as traitors to the king, and lose their heads. This proclamation having been made, there was none that durst break it, and so all manner of men departed and scattered abroad, every man to his own place.

John Ball and Jack Straw were found hidden in an old house, thinking to have stolen away, but they could not, for they were accused by their own men. Of the taking of them the king and his lords were glad and struck off their heads, which were set on

London Bridge, and Wat Tyler's also ; but the valiant men's heads were taken down that they had set there the Thursday before.

These tidings were spread abroad, so that the people of the other counties, who were coming to London, returned back again to their own homes and durst come no farther.

Sir JOHN FROISSART'S *Chronicles*.

The Cup of Water

No touch in the history of the minstrel-king David gives us a more warm and personal feeling towards him than his longing for the water at the well of Bethlehem. Standing as the incident does in the summary of the characters of his mighty men, it is apt to appear to us as if it had taken place in his latter days ; but such is not the case—it befell while he was still under thirty, in the time of his persecution by Saul.

It was when the last attempt at reconciliation with the king had been made, when the affectionate parting with the generous and faithful Jonathan had taken place, when Saul was hunting him like a partridge on the mountains on the one side, and the Philistines had nearly taken his life on the other, that David, outlawed, yet loyal at the heart, sent his aged parents to the land of Moab for refuge, and himself took up his abode in the caves of the wild limestone hills that had become familiar to him when he was a shepherd. Brave captain and Heaven-destined king as he was, his name attracted round him a motley group of those that were in distress, or in debt, or discontented, and among them were the "mighty men" whose brave deeds won them the foremost parts in that army with which David was to fulfil the ancient promises to his people. There were his three nephews—Joab the ferocious and imperious, the chivalrous Abishai, and

Asahel, the fleet of foot ; there was the warlike Levite Benaiah, who slew lions and lion-like men ; and others who, like David himself, had done battle with the gigantic sons of Anak. Yet even these valiant men, so wild and lawless, could be kept in check by the voice of their young captain ; and outlaws as they were, they spoiled no peaceful villages, they lifted not their hands against the persecuting monarch, and the neighbouring farms lost not one lamb through their violence. Some at least listened to the song of their warlike minstrel :—

“ Come, ye children, and hearken to me ;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
What man is he that lusteth to live,
And would fain see good days ?
Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
And his lips that they speak no guile ;
Let him eschew evil, and do good ;
Let him seek peace, and ensue it.”

With such strains as these, sung to his harp, the warrior gained the hearts of his men to enthusiastic love, and gathered followers on all sides, among them eleven fierce men of Gad, with faces like lions and feet swift as roes, who swam the Jordan in time of flood, and fought their way to him, putting all enemies in the valleys to fight.

But the Eastern sun burnt on the bare rocks. A huge fissure, opening in the mountain ridge, encumbered at the bottom with broken rocks, with precipitous banks scarcely affording a footing for the wild goats—such is the spot where, upon a cleft on the steep precipice, still remain the foundations of the “ hold,” or tower, believed to have been David’s retreat ; and near at hand is the low-browed entrance of the galleried cave, alternating between narrow passages and spacious halls, but all oppressively hot and close. Waste and wild, without a bush or a tree, in

the feverish atmosphere of Palestine, it was a desolate region, and at length the wanderer's heart fainted in him, as he thought of his own home, with its rich and lovely terraced slopes, green with wheat, trellised with vines, and clouded with grey olive, and of the cool cisterns of living water by the gate of which he loved to sing—

“ He shall feed me in a green pasture,
And lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.”

His parched, longing lips gave utterance to the sigh,
“ Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of
the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate ! ”

Three of his brave men—apparently Abishai, Benaiyah, and Eleazar—heard the wish. Between their mountain fastness and the dearly-loved spring lay the host of the Philistines ; but their love for their leader feared no enemies. It was not only water that he longed for, but the water from the fountain which he had loved in his childhood. They descended from their chasm, broke through the midst of the enemy's army, and drew the water from the favourite spring, bearing it back, once again through the foe, to the tower upon the rock ! Deeply moved was their chief at this act of self-devotion—so much moved that the water seemed to him too sacred to be put to his own use. “ My God forbid it me that I should do this thing. Shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy ? for with the jeopardy of their lives they brought it.” And as a hallowed and precious gift, he poured out unto the Lord the water obtained at the price of such peril to his followers.

CHARLOTTE M. YONGE :
A Book of Golden Deeds.

Half a Crown's Worth of Fighting

It happened, fortunately perhaps for the Lowlands, that the wild Highlanders were as much addicted to quarrel with each other as with their Lowland neighbours. Two clans, or rather two leagues or confederacies, composed each of several separate clans, fell into such deadly feud with each other as filled the whole neighbourhood with slaughter and discord.

When this feud or quarrel could be no otherwise ended, it was resolved that the difference should be decided by a combat of thirty men of the Clan Chattan, against the same number of the Clan Kay ; that the battle should take place on the North Inch of Perth, a beautiful and level meadow, in part surrounded by the river Tay ; and that it should be fought in presence of the king and his nobles.

Now there was a cruel policy in this arrangement ; for it was to be supposed that all the best and leading men of each clan would desire to be among the thirty which were to fight for their honour, and it was no less to be expected that the battle would be very bloody and desperate. Thus, the probable event would be, that both clans, having lost very many of their best and bravest men, would be more easily managed in future. Such was probably the view of the king and his counsellors in permitting this desperate conflict, which, however, was much in the spirit of the times.

The parties on each side were drawn out, armed with sword and target, axe and dagger, and stood looking on each other with fierce and savage aspects, when, just as the signal for fight was expected, the commander of the Clan Chattan preceived that one of his men, whose heart had failed him, had deserted his standard.

There was no time to seek another man from the clan, so the chieftain, as his only resource, was obliged to offer a reward to any one who would fight in the room of the fugitive. Perhaps you think it might be difficult to get a man who, for a small hire, would undergo the perils of a battle which was likely to be so obstinate and deadly. But in that fighting age men valued their lives lightly. One Henry Wynd, a citizen of Perth, and a saddler by trade, a little bandy-legged man, but of great strength and activity, and well accustomed to use the broadsword, offered himself, for half a French crown, to serve on the part of the Clan Chattan in the battle of that day.

The signal was then given by sound of the royal trumpets, and of the great war-bagpipes of the Highlanders, and the two parties fell on each other with the utmost fury ; their natural ferocity of temper being excited by feudal hatred against the hostile clan, zeal for the honour of their own, and a consciousness that they were fighting in presence of the king and nobles of Scotland.

As they fought with the two-handed sword and axe, the wounds they inflicted on each other were of a ghastly size and character. Heads were cloven asunder, limbs were lopped from the trunk. The meadow was soon drenched with blood, and covered with dead and wounded men.

In the midst of the deadly conflict, the chieftain of the Clan Chattan observed that Henry Wynd, after he had slain one of the Clan Kay, drew aside, and did not seem willing to fight more.

"How is this," said he, "art thou afraid ? "

"Not I," answered Henry ; "but I have done enough of work for half a crown."

"Forward and fight," said the Highland chief ; "he that doth not grudge his day's work, I will not stint him in his wages."

Thus encouraged, Henry Wynd again plunged into

the conflict, and, by his excellence as a swordsman, contributed a great deal to the victory, which at length fell to the Clan Chattan. Ten of the victors, with Henry Wynd, whom the Highlanders called the *Gow Chrom* (that is, the crooked or bandy-legged smith, for he was both a smith and a saddler, war-saddles being then made of steel), were left alive, but they were all wounded.

Only one of the Clan Kay survived, and he was unhurt. But this single individual dared not oppose himself to eleven men, though all more or less injured, but, throwing himself into the Tay, swam to the other side, and went off to carry to the Highlands the news of his clan's defeat. It is said he was so ill received by his kinsmen that he put himself to death.

Some part of the above story is matter of tradition, but the general fact is certain. Henry Wynd was rewarded to the Highland chieftain's best abilities ; but it was remarked that, when the battle was over, he was not able to tell the name of the clan he had fought for, replying, when asked on which side he had been, that he was fighting for his own. Hence the proverb, " Every man for his own hand, as Henry Wynd fought."

SIR WALTER SCOTT:
Tales of a Grandfather.

The Night after Hastings

[On 14th October, 1066, a great body of men from all parts of Europe, a few of them Italian, many Breton, but most of them French, led by William the Duke of Normandy, who claimed Edward the Confessor's inheritance, defeated upon a hillside called " Hastings Plain " above the river Brede the less civilized supporters of Harold, who, under that provincial noble, had marched at full speed from Yorkshire to meet the invaders. The contest was not determined till very late in the day, and, while

there was no regular pursuit, the cutting off of laggards and the attempt to prevent the information and reorganization of the enemy could only be pursued after sunset.]

THE hermit in the wood beyond the Brede was very proud. He was not proud by nature—on the contrary, it was humility which had made him become a hermit, but a long acquaintance with mankind, with whom he favourably compared, and the increasing reverence of his neighbours had made him proud. He was proud because all the way from Dungeness through the Weald up to Crowborough Top he was the only Holy Man. There were, indeed, the parish priests, though but few even of these in the uplands, in the marsh parishes, and especially along the seashore, but they were of little account in his eyes, and of no very great account in those of their parishioners. Some were brazenly married and given to argument that such marriage was tolerable. All were drunken. He would wager that there was no man tonsured between Thames and the sea that could properly interpret the Creed: the Apostles' Creed, let alone the Nicene Creed. Nay, there were few that did not make a slip in the spoken parts of the Mass, and when it came to singing it was deplorable.

For his part it was his bounden duty to walk over into the valley of the Rother and hear Mass upon Sundays and upon certain Feasts, but he sat there in his little hut waiting for the day when good hermits should be the pattern of mankind, and he himself should be a priest as a priest should be. But he would not take orders; not he; he would have nothing to do with the accursed hand of Stigand. He had once walked to Canterbury. It had taken him two days, and the sight he saw at the end of it was quite enough. He cursed all those who made lax the service of God, and when any man made mention of the Archbishop in his presence he spat upon the ground.

He sat thus lonely in his little hut, with an expecta-

tion which was at once vague and convincing that better things were at hand. The lords were decayed, the clergy were corrupt, ignorant and rare, the populace had no voice—even the keen and talkative men who worked about the charcoal smelting-forges were besotted in temperament and servile; but better things were at hand. How they would come he could not tell. He thought, indeed, that the worst of the darkness had past, for there had been news, days and days past, of the landing of yet another host of pirates; yet he waited with an interior faith for order, for a light spread over the land and for a dignified and fixed society.

He was just upon eighty years old. He had something of a memory—and, above all, a tradition—of better things, for his father had revered and followed Dunstan, and he himself had hung up against the wall of his hut a leaden image of that man whom he already called a saint. In Mayfield he had friends who thoroughly agreed with this contempt of his for the decline of the countryside, and who partially understood his clinging to a resurrection of it.

Filled thus with a large dream, very confused but very powerful, he sat that night and slowly drank his ale out of a large, round, wooden bowl which he held up to his mouth with both hands as he supped it. It was a good four hours after sundown and there was no kind of noise in the Vale of Brede. A damp and somewhat cold mist was over all the countryside, and every now and then one could hear the drip of the wet falling from the leaves of the trees.

To him thus melancholy there stumbled in through the opening of the hut (for it had no door) a wounded man.

This man was very tall in stature, not very broad-shouldered, strong in the muscles of the arms, and uncertain in his gait. His face was long and narrow, hair let to grow for weeks straggled over it, and it

was as pale and dull as a wet leaf in autumn. The man had light blue eyes, not without fever. He staggered down, flopping upon the bench which ran by the side of the hut, and stared at the hermit for a good half-minute before speaking ; the hermit, looking at him, saw that all his left arm was bandaged up in rough rags ; they were dirty and saturated with blood.

The new-comer spoke in a weak tone and yet with violence, but what he said was quite unintelligible. From his accent he was certainly northern, perhaps a Northumbrian man, but it was stupid of him to speak his language in the south. The hermit spoke rapidly to him in Latin. It meant nothing to him. Then he spoke to him slowly in Latin, but the man only replied by a stupid glare. Then the hermit, in a careful and very chosen accent, recited what was best known as a common greeting between wanderers and himself, separating out each syllable.

“ *Fi-li mi quid quæ-ris ?* ”

The stranger, who was already drooping with exhaustion, looked at him dully, and replied by pulling out a loose tooth and letting his chin fall upon his chest. The hermit had not known that there were men this side of the sea who could not understand so simple a Latin phrase. There was no one in Sussex but could have answered it. That a Kentish man should not follow the speech of men from down the coast would be excusable enough, for the dialects of the coast varied, but that any human man should be quite dumb before the simplest conventional phrase of everyday Latin was a thing the hermit could not understand. He had heard that the pirates were like this, and there fell upon him that disgust and fear of the barbarian which, to men who love civilization and order, is the disgust and fear of a reptile ; but his Christian spirit overcame.

He let the wounded man lie down upon the bench,

he covered him with a thick cloth, and he put under his head a heap of straw. The wounded man lay there and stared, still quite stupidly, now at the burning tow in the tallow-bowl, now at the darkness outside the doorway. As he lay, he muttered continually between his swollen lips, and with his wounded and broken mouth words of the north country ; that Tostig was a great lord ; that Harold was a great lord ; that he knew not which was lord of his lord ; that lords should not force poor men to fight ; that he had come through many lands and hated them all ; that he hated most this land in which a plain man was asked to fight against horses, and was hit about the head with iron, and in which not even the men of the place would speak a Christian tongue, but only sorcery. So far as any emotion remained in him, it was a fear that the hermit would bewitch him. He had distinctly heard him use the language of incantation.

Meanwhile the hermit understood nothing of all this, but was still bewildered, wondering who on earth this man could be, and deciding at last that he must be one of those pirates who had so recently landed, and of whom he had heard that they were not ten miles away, and whose battle it was which had made a distant clamour over the brow of the hill that very afternoon.

The old man sat there quite silent, and bit by bit his wounded guest muttered less and less audibly, and was at last silent also.

It was now near midnight when the hermit heard outside the noise of horse-hoofsoughing in the wet clay of the woodland. He had more visitors. There came in two men very different from anything he had met before. The one was still covered in a coat of fine-linked mail, with a leather girdle and hanging from it a very large sword. His head was uncovered and round, the hair cropped close, the face clean shaven, with a square jaw and vigorous deep brown eyes. The other was dressed in fine cloth, his gloves had

fur upon them, and he carried himself like a man who was always dainty and unwilling to undergo fatigue.

In these men there was no hesitation. The first of them (who was in armour) spoke at once in the Church Latin with such an accent as the hermit had heard on the lips of monks from Devonshire, with whistling “u’s” and broad “a’s” but with a foreign thinness. He asked whether any man had taken refuge in the hut. Then his eye fell upon the figure which lay quite still upon the bench. That companion of his who was not in armour spoke in a sort of soft and musical southern Latin which the hermit could still just follow, and repeated the question of his companion. The hermit answered :

“ My lords, you are great lords. I know nothing of this man, except that I have given him charity.”

The new-comers were soldiers, and true soldiers had never yet been in the island. Their reticence, their decision, their immediate actions, were appalling to the hermit. The short man in armour beckoned sharply towards the outer darkness. He was at once obeyed. Two serving-men, short also, bullet-headed also, stamped with the same stamp as their lord, came in at once, leading between them a tall, fair, lumbering man who was closely bound. They bade him speak to the wounded figure on the bench and interpret for them. The prisoner did not disobey, but quite willingly spoke in that modern dialect of his a few incomprehensible words, and then shook his head. The hermit did not understand the words, but he half understood the gesture. He leant over the bench, and making the sign of the Cross upon himself and afterwards in the air above the head of the wounded man, he said to them in Latin : “ He is dead.”

The Norman knight and his Italian companion stood somewhat relaxed at the news, but not pleased, as if a long quest, to which they had been ordered, and which they had themselves thought use-

less, was now ended. They left with the hermit two of their serving-men and money for the burial and for one Mass only. The money was of a sort the hermit had not seen before.

These lords then rode out into the night with their followers, making for their camp, and next morning the hermit hired with the money given him six woodland men, who bore the Northumbrian upon a litter, and he was buried in the churchyard over the hill by the Rother, and one Mass was said for his soul.

HILAIRE BELLOC: *The Eye-Witness.*

Manoa the Golden¹

MY head was buzzing like a spinning-top, and it seemed that scalding water fell on me so that I could scarce draw breath. Also there was an orange-tawny bird, with a blue beak and a face like the parson of Budleigh, that kept cocking a wicked eye on me and flapping his wings. I besought Amias Thyn to kill the fowl, but he answered that 'twas only a fancy of my fever. Upon that I up and fetched Amias a blow on the face, and myself the next moment toppled to the earth. For certain I was very near my end. The poison from the arrow-head had wrought desperately in my blood, and I was fallen into the last fever of the brain.

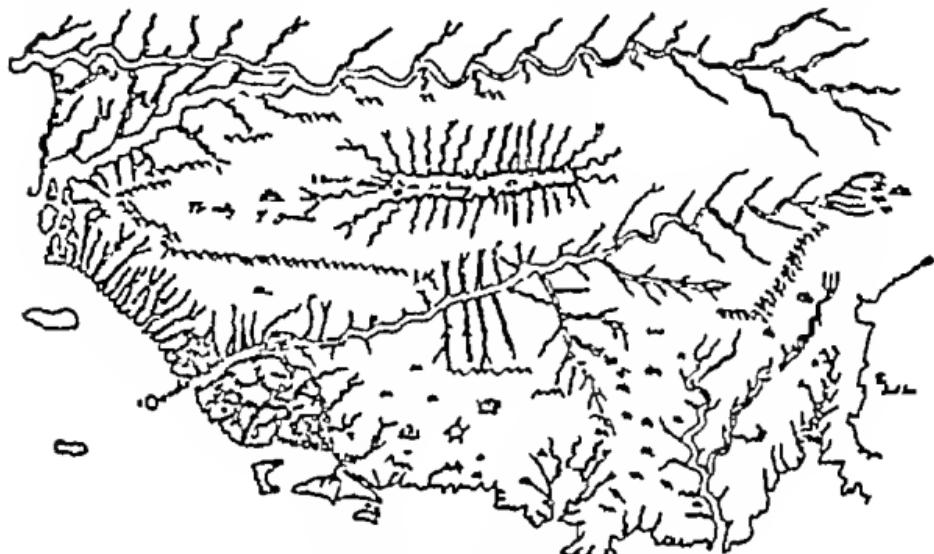
I was now five months out of England, weary months in truth for body and soul. Since the February morn when we sailed from Plymouth, we had traversed many thousand leagues of ocean, made capture of ships, and laid hand on the new-built

¹ Nathan Stubbs, captain of the ship *Good Venture*, told this tale to Master Samuel Purchas, who omitted it for obvious reasons from his famous *Pilgrimes*. Nathan's narrative, however, exists in MS. in a very difficult handwriting, and a copy is in the library of an Oxford college.—Author.

Spanish city of Saint Joseph in the isle of Trinidad. For guide we had Captain Jacob Whiddon, an old voyager in these parts, and for fellow-adventurers young bloods from every manor in the West, and likewise some tough and salted sea-captains to correct the yeast of youth. Our Admiral was that famous knight Walter Raleigh, the Captain of Her Majesty's Guard, and the Lieutenant-General of the County of Cornwall. Aforetime I had known this Sir Walter, when he was the glory and particular star of the Court. He was used to come among us of the sea at every port in the West, and would sit for hours discussing of our travels. I have seen him at Falmouth and Plymouth, in rich robes and chains of gold, seated hard by a tarry sailorman, as if he had never trod softer floors than a ship's deck. Hence he was vehemently beloved by all seafarers, but he had ever a moody brow and a dark eye, save when he glowed at some tale of adventure. We had heard how he had fallen into disgrace with the Queen, and was enclosed for long in the Tower of London, and then banished to his country manor. When the word went round that he was equipping a fleet for a venture to the Indies, there was no man from Southampton to Bristol but burned to sail with him. I mind well how he came down to Plymouth Quay to join his ships, with so gay a step and light an eye you would have thought him no more than boy. When the crews cheered him from the bulwarks, he waved his hat and smiled like a man who has at last come home.

But to my tale. From Trinidad we set out in a flotilla, for our vessels could not ascend the river Orinoko, because of the shoals and currents. The whole company of us had to ship in three wherries and a barge. As for the Admiral, he had an old gallego boat cut down so that she drew but five feet of water, fitted her with banks of oars, and embarked in her with sixty officers and gentlemen-volunteers. After

that I mind little save the sickness that racked us in the open sea ere we made the mouth of the river, and the perilous water-ways we laboured through thereafter. There was no room to land, for the woods came down to the edge as thick as furze and reached evil claws into the water. The air was full of fever, and



RALEIGH'S MAP OF NEW GUINEA, EL DORADO, AND THE ORINOCO COAST.

From the original map, drawn by Raleigh, in the British Museum. This map, like so many of the older charts, is drawn upside down, the South being at the top and the East on the left, while the Panama Isthmus is at the bottom on the right. The river above the "Lake of Manoa" is the Amazon.

the heat of the sun like gusts from a baker's oven. We were for ever grounding in shallows, and to shove off had to wade deep in the stream, in mortal fear of the noisome toothed serpents called Lagartos that dwell in such rivers. From ill feeding and unchanged raiment we became foul and offensive alike to our fellows and ourselves; and the incessant toil of rowing, in which gentle and simple shared alike, came near to driving us mad. But through it all the Admiral abated nothing of his courage and sweet temper. He

would urge us on with a cheerful word and a merry quip, and the weakest would bend stoutly to the oars if he saw Sir Walter near him.

Presently we came out of the narrows to the main stream of the Orinoko, and found the noblest country mine eyes had ever beheld. 'Twas a great park, full of green grass and high groves of trees and a multitude of fruits. The deer flocked to the water's edge as if they had been used to a keeper's call. Now 'twas possible to land, and eat and sleep on solid ground. A merry wind sprang up behind us and lessened the toil of rowing, and, having abundant food and good knowledge of the way, our hearts were wondrously uplifted. On the seventh day we saw afar off toward the West a blue line of mountains, and rejoiced, for we knew them for the husk of El Dorado.

After a fortnight's passage, during which we saw many curious things, we came to Morequito, the port of the kingdom of Aromaia, and found there the King Topiawari, whose nephew had been foully slain by the Spaniard. He welcomed us graciously, and gave us bread and wine and all manner of flesh and fowl; likewise a quantity of pine-apples, the princess of all fruits, which purgeth the fever from a man's blood. As the king led us about his country we remarked the rocks streaked with gold, which was no Marquesite, such as appears in other parts of the Indies, but the true "Mother of Gold" that is the guide to rich metal below the soil. Also we found a stone like a sapphire, and the people had great wealth of spleen-stones, or, as some name them, emeralds. But especially the King Topiawari told the Admiral of the City of Manoa, where the Incas rule, which lieth many leagues west by south in the high hills. All round the base of the mountain dwelleth a fierce tribe, by name the Epi-mureans, who are in league with the Inca and keep his marches. They war with the other Indian peoples, and the king was earnest with us to join him in a

march against them. But the Admiral considered that we had too few men for such a venture, and that the floods of the river which were now beginning made it impolitic to penetrate farther that year in the direction of Manoa. He therefore resolved to return, being satisfied of the great riches of the country and the friendly disposition of the people to our mistress the Queen of England. The Indians marvelled at our clemency and justice, for by the Admiral's orders no man might take so much as a potato plant from one of the poor people without making him satisfaction.

'Twas in the last days of June that my troubles began. The Admiral sent for me and told me his purpose of return. He said that he desired more knowledge about the golden parts of Guiana, and the civil towns and apparelled people of the Incas, and he desired this knowledge from English eyes and lips. There was an old Cacique, dwelling in the upper vales of the Caroni, a river of Aromaia, whose town was but two days' march from the borders of the Epimureans. He was willing to guide me to the borders, if haply from some hill-top I might get sight of the great lake on which stands the City of Manoa. Then he would lead me back by a shorter path, so that I might join the flotilla on its homeward journey. "You will take with you Amias Thyn," said Sir Walter, "for I can spare no more English. And God be with you, Nathan, for I know you a man of discretion and good heart."

By this time I was somewhat restored in health, and my eagerness for the errand had almost made me leap with joy. We departed on a fine sunshine morning, and journeyed in boats as far as the flow of the Caroni allowed. But since the flood-time was beginning the rowers could scarcely win a stone's throw in an hour, so we put to land, and travelled on foot beyond the falls of the river, which are a dozen in number and each as high as a church tower. There-

after we reached a country of short grass and pressed on easily, save that Amias Thyn, who was no footman, lagged somewhat behind. By the second evening we had come to the town of the Cacique, and were civilly lodged in a hut of wood. That night the people of the place brought us pine-apple wine in stone jars, and so caroused with us that Amias was like to have perished of colic.

The next morn we set out with the Cacique and two Indian guides into the woods which stretched to the country of the Epimureans. From the start I knew that the venture was to be ill-fated, for I saw three crows on a single branch, and Amias, being giddy from the night's frolic, shot at one with his musket. The Cacique warned us that the woods were full of evil men, who are of a different race from the Indians and are called, I think, Aroras. They have squat bodies and sleek black hair, and live on human flesh. Also they shoot poisoned arrows, of which only the Indian sooth-sayers know the cure. But, said he, his tribe was at peace with the Aroras, and if we went discreetly and fast we might win through without trouble.

All went well till the afternoon of the next day, when we seemed to be near the edge of the trees, for in the gaps we could see peaks of mountains. We had halted for food, when there came a cry from the guide who led us and a rustling in the thicket. Presently I saw a dark face among the leaves, and ere I knew something pierced my shoulder. I fired my musket at the invisible foe, and Amias did the like ; and the next second all was quiet save for the mutterings of the Indians. But when the Cacique saw my wound he set up a great lamentation, and cried out that I had taken a deadly poison. A faintness fell on me, and in a dream I suffered him to cut away the flesh and burn the wound with powder. Then I was dragged between the Indians at a great pace through the trees until we came to the edge of a rocky upland.

That Cacique was the best Christian it has ever been my lot to meet. He bade his men make a rough hut for me, in which I lay tortured with pain and yet so weak that I could scarce move to ease my anguish. He gave me medicine, but it seemed that he had not the knowledge of the royal cure. For he bade Amias watch me close to prevent me doing a mischief in my madness, and set off to find an Indian soothsayer who should heal my wound. All this Amias told me later. . . .

So I come to where my tale began, as I lay raving in the hut on the border of the Epimureans. After I smote Amias I lost all knowledge of the world. In such state I lay for hours, and then about the first light my mind cleared. The torture had gone, my wits had returned, but I felt the life ebbing in my members. I knew that death was near, and strove to turn my mind to thoughts of heaven. But all I could see was the blessed orange-tawny bird with the face of the parson of Budleigh.

I noted Amias sunk in sleep on the ground, as weary as a hound after the chase. I wanted to laugh at the oddity of his red face burrowed into the leaves. Then the screen of boughs was lifted and I saw the Cacique bending over me, and with him another. That other was an old man with a thin white beard and a high nose; and I thought him a white heron come to fight the terrible orange-tawny fowl.

I know not what he did to me, but six hours later I awoke from deep slumber with the pain gone and my health restored, save for a singing in my head like the fall of a weir. There was Amias smoking a pipe, and the Cacique and the old soothsayer playing a game on a thing like a chessboard.

“ Ho, there ! ” I cried in a thin voice. “ God has raised me up, and His name be praised ! We have no time to tarry if I am to join the Admiral. We must be up and off this very day.”

The priest came to my side. He was a lean old man, the bloom of his complexion grown by age to a fine ivory.

"What came you out for to seek?" he asks, like the Scriptures.

"I am bidden by the Admiral to find the hill in the land of the Epimureans from which a man may see the City of Manoa." I spoke in Spanish to the Cacique, who turned my words into the Indian tongue.

The old man shook his head. "I have heard of you English as a great people of the East, who worship the one God and are ruled by a Virgin. You do justly by all men, and rob not like those of Spain. But why seek you Manoa?"

"Why?" I cried. "Because of the tales of it. 'Tis a mystery that fires our blood. I want to see the princes who smear their bodies with gum and roll in gold dust, and the city so great that if a man enters one afternoon 'tis the evening of the next day ere he comes to the king's palace. I would see the golden battlements, and the golden birds that sing by magic, and the golden flowers that deck the islands. I mind of a lame Spaniard in Cartagena who had a pouch full of gold beads that he told me were the pebbles of the lake shore."

"And if you win there, you English, what next?" says the priest.

"For us common folk there will be gold," said I. "I know not the mind of my Admiral, but 'tis rumoured that he would ally our kingdom with the Grand Inca, and make so strong a band against the Spaniard as to drive him forth of Tierra Firme."

The priest spoke in Indian to the Cacique. Then he looked first at me and then at Amias as if he would search our souls.

"My brother has sworn to lead you to the Hill of Vision," he said. "And it is just that he should keep troth. But I warn you that ill may come of it. The

Golden City is strong guarded by the spells of dead kings. I cannot break them. No stranger from the East will fare better."

I answered that I feared no charm, being strong in the Christian faith; but he paid little heed to my words.

" You are feeble," he said, " and 'tis a hard journey. I have brought you back from the edge of death. Will you trust me to fortify you for travel ? "

The Cacique was earnest with me to swallow the priest's drug; for without this, he said, we should both faint by the way. From a wallet he took some little packets and mingled two potions each, for me and Amias. The first was bitter as wormwood and set my ears drumming so that I feared deafness. The second put me into a great ease and contentment, so that I could have sung aloud for joy. Amias, who was ever a fool, did indeed sing—a tavern ditty about Poll and Sue, which he fitted to a melancholious psalm tune.

A little later we started, while it was still forenoon, and travelled up the rocky slope of the hills. The priest and I rode on mules which he had brought, while Amias and the Cacique went on foot. Amias was for ordinary a miserable footman, but the potion he had drunk so filled him with eagerness that he outstepped the mules. We spoke little, being deep sunk in peace. All I knew was that we mounted ever higher, till we saw the land behind us lie flat to the Orinoko, and in front and on either hand great swellings of mountain.

I mind the exceeding gladness I felt. 'Twas like boyhood returned, with no sin to burden the conscience and no failure to cloud the spirit. Whether 'twas the drug or the high air I know not, but I seemed to be out of the body. We wound up a track that led to a pass in the hills, and in the nick of it the sun was setting like an eye of fire. I made certain

that beyond that pass lay Manoa : indeed the sky had a shimmer of light as if it had caught the reflection from acres of gold ; and I cried on the others to hasten, that we might win up by nightfall. But the pass was longer than I had judged, and at the darkness we were forced to camp some way short of the summit.

I ate little food, and soon fell asleep in deep weariness. All night long I dreamed of angels and heavenly mansions, so delectable a dream that I could have wept at the wakening. 'Twas a clear dawn, and no man spoke as we saddled the mules and took our way toward the ridge of the mountains.

Many times in my life I have been a-quiver with eagerness, so that my knees loosened under me, and my heart smote on my ribs. I have felt thus in a sea-fight before the shots began, and very notably when I waited on Nell Ottaway's answer to the declaration of my love. But never in love or war have I felt so shattering a tremor. Even the muddy soul of Amias Thyn was kindled to expectation. Every step, I thought, would bring me the promised sight, but a ridge intervened, and still another. At last, when I did not look for it, we had turned a corner and stood on a ledge gazing on a new country.

I fell off my mule, and with Amias viewed the prospect on my knees, calling on God to be merciful to sinful men. For this was what I saw. . . .

Below me the cliffs fell sheer for a mile or so to a plain of greenest grass where herds of white cattle grazed. There was a brimming river winding through the meadows, as I have seen the Thames wind in the fields by Richmond. Beyond these pastures were orchards, where it seemed to me I could see golden fruit hang as thick as haws on a whitethorn. And beyond the orchards was a lake, so long that to left and right its blue waters were lost in haze. On this lake I saw the white sails of many craft, and on its multitude of isles white towers and flowery gardens.

But beyond the lake was the sight that bankrupted me of breath and sent Amias to his prayers. For there stood a city so great and noble that it seemed as if no mortal could have raised it. 'Twas all of shimmering white like sea-foam, but the roofs were of naked gold. I saw the streets run in pleasant lines to a great palace set on a low hill, which was assuredly the jewel of so fair a casket. Its golden dome was like a mirror, in which the clouds showed themselves and the sun was re-born.

Yet 'twas not the riches and magnificence of Manoa that melted my heart : 'twas its air of happy peace. From my hill-top I could see no inhabitants, though a faint hum of life rose to my ears. But a kind of glory brooded there such as the Blessed may hope for in Paradise. I had forgotten about gold and fame, for the thing seemed too precious to pollute with mortal thoughts. 'Twas a realm so far more lovely and desirable than the greatest empire that I could scarce believe it to be of this world. As for Amias he did nothing but weep and pray.

" You see Manoa, my son," said the priest's voice. " If you would see your friends again, 'tis time to depart."

At this I fell into despair. I could not leave so noble a vision. I besought him to show me the entrance, though it should cost me years of travel. Nay, I would gladly have starved slowly on that ledge of rock so that I could have feasted my eyes on the City.

" There is no entrance for you," he said. " The folk of the City are wise, and would keep free from the wars and sorrows of the world. They have guarded their land with spells that no man can break save with their good will. I have brought you to the sight of it, because I have heard of the honour of your people. Think well of it, my son ; 'tis not fitting to mar so fair a thing for any lust of treasure. Seek your gold mines

elsewhere, for you cannot reach the pure gold of the City of the Sun."

I asked if no man had entered the place.

"Once," said he, "a man found the key after years of toil, but it profited him nothing. He entered the City and saw its glories, but his soul was earthy and the sight destroyed his wits. He was led forth, and travelled back to the Spanish towns, but he babbled wild things and died in a frenzy. No man believed his tale. . . . But see. The gods warn us. If we would save our lives, we must depart."

A black thundercloud was gathering round the heights, and in another minute the storm burst, almost sweeping us from our ledge. We hastened to leave, the regret in my soul so choking me that I had no speech, nor any strength to stay. But as we went I noted one marvel. For, whereas the storm was dark around us to the edge of the cliff, beyond 'twas clear sunlight. Through the driving sleet I had one last glimpse of the shining towers of Manoa the Golden . . .

Seven days later, on the bank of the Orinoko, we met with the Admiral's flotilla. Seven weary days they proved, so that Amias and I were but hollow-eyed scarecrows when out of the swamps we hailed the first boats. We had both fallen into a fever, partly from toil and partly from the regret and wonder of our minds. Indeed 'twas little I cared what befell me. Ravening beasts and savage men were as nothing compared with the ache of loss in my heart.

Sir Walter had me aboard the gallego, and in presence of his officers and volunteers questioned me on our adventure. I begged that I might tell them first to his private ear ; and seeing the earnestness of my demeanour and the marks of labour I bore on me, he granted my request. So that evening, when we had landed on an isle to pass the night, he took me apart into a woody place and asked for my tale.

I told him as well as I could of my wound in the forest, of its cure, and the journey to the gap of the hills. Then I spoke of Manoa so far as my poor words could envisage such a marvel. The Admiral heard me with eager eyes.

"You saw it, my brave Nathan? But that is what no Spaniard these fifty years hath done!"

"Ay, but I saw it from a mountain-top, and I saw no way to enter."

"Cliffs can be scaled," said he; "and if there be another ingress, it will be found. The great matter is that the City is there, and can be viewed in two days' march into the land of the Epimureans. It needs but a man skilled in travel to chart the valley, and discover where the river you speak of leaves it. What the Spaniard Martinez could do is not beyond the range of Englishmen."

Then he fell to questioning me about small particulars, being very curious about the islands in the lake and the great white palace or temple which commanded the City. He wrote down in a book what I had to tell him, and made a chart of the place and the way thereto. He was warm in his commendation. "When we return," he says, "you shall lead the advance, Nathan. As you were the first to see the City, so you shall be the first of the English to tread its streets."

"Your pardon, sir," said I, "but these same streets I will never tread."

And when he asked my meaning, I up and spoke what was in my heart.

"I am a man of blood and guile," I said, "whose life has been spent in pursuits the most conducing to these faults. But all the while I have a proper notion of virtue, and I would not sin against God's plain command. That City, I take it, is as Eden before our father Adam sinned. I know not whether the folk who dwell in it be Christians after our meaning; but of

this I am sure, that in very truth they worship God. That valley is like Paradise for peace. The sight of it clouds the senses and makes the heart sore as a man's heart is sore for the home of his childhood. For us men of blood to enter the place would be great sin. I will have no part in violating so holy a shrine. We go to offer an alliance to the Grand Inca. But what need has he of an alliance when God's cherubim are on his side? If we fought and won, the gold and jewels would be our plunder. And the City would be the quarry of every ruffian from the four corners of earth. 'Twould be the offence against the Holy Ghost, and, sinful man though I be, I will have no hand in it."

The Admiral watched me curiously, and narrowed his eyes as if in thought.

" You say the priest gave you a drug to heal your wound. May it not be that the City you saw was a dream? "

" Nay, it could not be," said I. " There is no drug would set a man shivering on a rock with a storm behind him and the New Jerusalem at his feet."

" Then, Nathan, 'tis like the lost Atlantis," he said musingly. " 'Tis a City not of Time but of Eternity."

He opened his doublet and showed a jewel of gold which hung by a cord around his neck. " That," said he, " is the badge of my quest for the Golden City. He who gave it me sought for it all his days, and, like you, saw it but from a hill-top. I cannot draw back from the search. But I think that when I go I will go alone."

After that we spoke no more of the business. I kept my own counsel, and the Admiral gave out to the others that I had found a certain way to Manoa, but had been held back from going farther by shortness of time and his express commands. Amias Thyn, to be sure, told marvellous tales to his comrades, but he was so confused in his speech that he had no credence.

Indeed the rumour spread that he had never ventured beyond the Indian town, but had lain there for a fortnight incontinently drunk. . . .

JOHN BUCHAN: *Sir Walter Raleigh.*

Giant Golden-beard

IN a country village, over the hills and far away, lived a poor man, who had an only son born to him. Now this child was born under a lucky star, and was therefore what the people of that country call a Luck's-child ; and those who told his fortune said that in his fourteenth year he would marry no less a lady than the king's own daughter.

It so happened that the king of that land, soon after the child's birth, passed through the village in disguise, and stopping at the blacksmith's shop, asked what news was stirring.

"Good news ! " said the people. " Master Brock, down that lane, has just had a child born to him that they say is a Luck's-child ; and we are told that, when he is fourteen years old, he is fated to marry our noble king's daughter."

This did not please the king ; so he went to the poor child's parents, and asked them whether they would sell him their son. " No, " said they. But the stranger begged very hard, and said he would give a great deal of money : so as they had scarcely bread to eat, they at last agreed, saying to themselves, " He is a Luck's-child ; all, therefore, is no doubt for the best —he can come to no harm."

The king took the child, put it into a box, and rode away ; but when he came to a deep stream he threw the box into the current, and said to himself, " That young gentleman will never be my daughter's husband."

The box, however, floated down the stream. Some kind fairy watched over it, so that no water reached the child ; and at last, about two miles from the king's chief city, it stopped at the dam of a mill. The miller soon saw it, and took a long pole and drew it towards the shore, and finding it heavy, thought there was gold inside ; but when he opened it he found a pretty little boy that smiled upon him merrily.

Now the miller and his wife had no children, and they therefore rejoiced to see their prize, saying, "Heaven has sent it to us" ; so they treated it very kindly, and brought it up with such care that every one liked and loved it.

About thirteen years passed over their heads, when the same king came by chance to the mill, and seeing the boy, asked the miller if that was his son. "No," said he, "I found him, when a babe, floating down the river in a box into the mill-dam." "How long ago ?" asked the king. "Some thirteen years," said the miller. "He is a fine fellow," said the king ; "can you spare him to carry a letter to the queen ? It will please me very much, and I will give him two pieces of gold for his trouble." "As your majesty pleases," said the miller.

Now the king had guessed at once that this must be the child he had tried to drown, so he wrote a letter by him to the queen, saying, "As soon as the bearer of this reaches you, let him be killed and buried, so that all may be over before I come back."

The young man set out with this letter but missed his way, and came in the evening to a dark wood. Through the gloom he saw a light afar off, to which he bent his steps, and found that it came from a little cottage. There was no one within except an old woman, who was frightened at seeing him, and said, "Why do you come hither, and whither are you going ?" "I am going to the queen, to whom I was to have given a letter ; but I have lost my way, and

shall be glad if you will give me a night's rest." " You are very unlucky," said she, " for this is a robbers' hut ; and if the band come back while you are here it may be worse for you." " I am so tired, however," replied he, " that I must take my chance, for I can go no farther ; " so he laid the letter on the table, stretched himself out upon a bench, and fell asleep.

When the robbers came home and saw him, they asked the old woman who the strange lad was. " I have given him shelter for charity," said she ; " he had a letter to carry to the queen, and lost his way."

The robbers took up the letter, broke it open, and read the orders which were in it to murder the bearer. Then their leader was very angry at the king's trick ; so he tore his letter, and wrote a fresh one, begging the queen, as soon as the young man reached her, to marry him to the princess. Meantime they let him sleep on till morning broke, and then showed him the right way to the queen's palace ; where, as soon as she had read the letter, she made all ready for the wedding : and as the young man was very handsome, the princess was very dutiful, and took him then and there for a husband.

After a while the king came back ; and when he saw that this Luck's-child was married to the princess, notwithstanding all the art and cunning he had used to thwart his luck, he asked eagerly how all this had happened, and what were the orders which he had given.

" Dear husband," said the queen, " here is your own letter—read it for yourself." The king took it, and seeing that an exchange had been made, asked his son-in-law what he had done with the letter he gave him to carry. " I know nothing of it," said he ; " if it is not the one you gave me, it must have been taken away in the night when I slept."

Then the king was very wroth and said, " No man shall have my daughter who does not go down into the

wonderful cave and bring me three golden hairs from the beard of the giant king who reigns there ; do this, and you shall have my free leave to be my daughter's husband." " I will soon do that," said the youth ; so he took leave of his wife and set out on his journey.

At the first city that he came to, the guard at the gate stopped him, and asked what trade he followed, and what he knew. " I know everything," said he. " If that be so," said they, " you are just the man we want ; be so good as to find out why our fountain in the market-place is dry, and will give no water. Tell us the cause of that, and we will give you two asses loaded with gold." " With all my heart," said he, " when I come back."

Then he journeyed on, and came to another city, and there the guard also asked him what trade he followed, and what he understood. " I know everything," answered he. " Then pray do us a good turn," said they ; " tell us why a tree, which always before bore us golden apples, does not even bear a leaf this year." " Most willingly," said he, " as I come back."

At last his way led him to the side of a great lake of water, over which he must pass. The ferryman soon began to ask, as the others had done, what was his trade, and what he knew. " Everything," said he. " Then," said the other, " pray tell me why I am forced for ever to ferry over this water, and have never been able to get my freedom ; I will reward you handsomely." " Ferry me over," said the young man, " and I will tell you all about it as I come home."

When he had passed the water, he came to the wonderful cave. It looked very black and gloomy ; but the wizard king was not at home, and his grandmother sat at the door in her easy-chair. " What do you want ? " said she. " Three golden hairs from the giant's beard," answered he. " You will run a great risk," said she, " when he comes home ; yet I will try

what I can do for you." Then she changed him into an ant, and told him to hide himself in the folds of her cloak. "Very well," said he: "but I want also to know why the city fountain is dry; why the tree that bore golden apples is now leafless; and what it is that binds the ferryman to his post." "You seem fond of asking puzzling things," said the old dame; "but lie still, and listen to what the giant says when I pull the golden hairs, and perhaps you may learn what you want." Soon night set in, and the old gentleman came home. As soon as he entered he began to snuff up the air, and cried, "All is not right here: I smell man's flesh." Then he searched all round in vain, and the old dame scolded, and said, "Why should you turn everything topsy-turvy? I have just set all straight." Upon this he laid his head in her lap, and soon fell asleep. As soon as he began to snore, she seized one of the golden hairs of his beard and pulled it out. "Mercy!" cried he, starting up: "what are you about?" "I had a dream that roused me," said she, "and in my trouble I seized hold of your hair. I dreamt that the fountain in the market-place of the city was become dry, and would give no water: what can be the cause?" "Ah! if they could find that out they would be glad," said the giant: "under a stone in the fountain sits a toad; when they kill him, it will flow again."

This said, he fell asleep, and the old lady pulled out another hair. "What would you be at?" cried he in a rage. "Don't be angry," said she, "I did it in my sleep; I dreamt that I was in a great kingdom a long way off, and that there was a beautiful tree there, that used to bear golden apples, but that now has not even a leaf upon it; what is the meaning of that?" "Aha!" said the giant, "they would like very well to know that. At the root of the tree a mouse is gnawing; if they were to kill him, the tree would bear golden apples again: if not, it will soon die.

Now do let me sleep in peace ; if you wake me again, you shall rue it."

Then he fell once more asleep ; and when she heard him snore she pulled out the third golden hair, and the giant jumped up and threatened her sorely ; but she soothed him, and said, " It was a very strange dream I had this time : methought I saw a ferryman, who was bound to ply backwards and forwards over a great lake, and could never find out how to set himself free ; what is the charm that binds him ? " " A silly fool ! " said the giant : " if he were to give the rudder into the hand of any passenger that came, he would find himself free, and the other would be forced to take his place. Now pray let me sleep."

In the morning the giant arose and went out ; and the old woman gave the young man the three golden hairs, reminded him of the three answers, and sent him on his way.

He soon came to the ferryman, who knew him again, and asked for the answer which he had said he would give him. " Ferry me over first," said he, " and then I will tell you." When the boat reached the other side, he told him to give the rudder to the first passenger that came, and then he might run away as soon as he pleased. The next place that he came to was the city where the barren tree stood : " Kill the mouse," said he, " that is gnawing the tree's root, and you will have golden apples again." They gave him a rich gift for this news, and he journeyed on to the city where the fountain had dried up ; and the guard asked him how to make the water flow. So he told them how to cure that mischief, and they thanked him, and gave him the two asses laden with gold.

And now at last this Luck's-child reached home, and his wife was very glad to see him, and to hear how well everything had gone with him. Then he gave the three golden hairs to the king, who could no longer deny him, though he was at heart quite as

spiteful against his son-in-law as ever. The gold, however, astonished him, and when he saw all the treasure he cried out with joy, "My dear son, where did you find all this gold?" "By the side of a lake," said the youth, "where there is plenty more to be had." "Pray tell me where it lies," said the king, "that I may go and get some too." "As much as you please," replied the other. "You must set out and travel on and on, till you come to the shore of a great lake: there you will see a ferryman; let him carry you across, and when once you are over, you will see gold as plentiful as sand upon the shore."

Away went the greedy king; and when he came to the lake he beckoned to the ferryman, who gladly took him into his boat; and as soon as he was there gave the rudder into his hand and sprang ashore, leaving the old king to ferry away, as a reward for his craftiness and treachery.

"And is his majesty plying there to this day?" You may be sure of that, for nobody will trouble himself to take the rudder out of his hands.

Mediaeval Story.

The Bottle Neck

Down in a narrow, crooked street among other poverty-stricken houses stood a very high and narrow dwelling, built of lath and plaster; it was in a very bad state, and bulged out in every direction. It was entirely inhabited by poor people, but the attic looked the poorest of all. Outside the window in the sunshine hung a battered bird cage, which had not even got a proper drinking glass, but only the neck of a bottle turned upside down, with a cork at the bottom to serve this purpose.

An old maid stood at the window; she had just been hanging chickweed all over the cage in which a little

linnet hopped about from perch to perch, singing as gaily as possible.

"Ah, you may well sing!" said the bottle neck; but of course it did not say the words as we should say them, for a bottle neck cannot talk, but it thought within itself, much as when we talk to ourselves.

"Yes, you may well sing, you who have all your limbs whole. You should try what it is like to have lost the lower part of your body like me, and only to have a neck and a mouth, and that with a cork in it, such as I have, and you wouldn't sing much. I have nothing to make me sing, nor could I if I would."

"But it is a good thing that somebody is pleased. I could have sung when I was a whole bottle. One day I went to the picnic in the wood, with the furrier and his family, and his daughter was engaged—yes, I remember it as well as if it had been yesterday. I have had no end of experiences when I begin to look back upon them. I have been through fire and water, and down into the black earth, and higher up than most people, and now I hang in the sunshine outside a bird cage. It might be worth while to listen to my story, but I don't speak very loud about it, for I can't."

Then it related within itself, or thought out its story inwardly. It was a curious story. Meanwhile the little bird twittered away happily enough, and down in the street people walked and drove as usual, all bent upon their own concerns, thinking about them, or about nothing at all; but not so the bottle neck.

It recalled the glowing smelting furnace in the factory, where it had been blown into life. It still remembered feeling quite warm, and gazing longingly into the roaring furnace, its birthplace; and its great desire to leap back again into it. But little by little as it cooled it began to feel quite comfortable where it was. It was standing in a row with a whole regiment of brothers and sisters, all from the same furnace, but

some were blown into champagne bottles, and others into beer bottles, which makes all the difference in their after life ! Later, when out in the world, a beer bottle may certainly contain the costliest wine, and a champagne bottle may be filled with blacking ; but what one is born to may be seen in the structure. Nobility is nobility even if it has black blood in its veins !

All the bottles were soon packed up and our bottle with them. It never dreamt then of ending its days as a bottle neck serving as a drinking glass for a bird ; but after all that is an honourable position, so one is still something. It first saw the light again when, with its other companions, it was unpacked in the wine merchant's cellar. Its first rinsing was a peculiar experience. Then it lay empty and corkless, and felt curiously flat. It missed something but did not know exactly what it was. Next it was filled with some strong wine, was corked and sealed, and last of all it was labelled outside " first quality."

This was just as if it had passed first class in an examination, but of course the wine was really good and so was the bottle. While one is young one is a poet ! Something within it sang and rejoiced, something which it really knew nothing at all about ; green sunlit slopes where the vine grew, merry girls and jovial youths singing and smiling at each other. Ah, life is a heavenly thing ! All this stirred and worked within the bottle just as it does in young poets, who very often know no more about it than the bottle.

At last one morning the bottle was bought by the furrier's apprentice ; he was sent for a bottle of the best wine. It was packed up in the luncheon basket together with the ham, the cheese, and the sausage ; the basket also contained butter of the best, and various fancy breads. The furrier's daughter packed it herself ; she was quite young and very pretty. She had laughing brown eyes, and a smile on her lips ; her hands were soft and delicate and very white, yet

not so white as her neck and throat. It was easy to see that she was one of the town beauties, and yet she was not engaged.

She held the provision basket on her lap during the drive to the wood. The neck of the bottle peeped out beyond the folds of the table-cloth. There was red sealing wax on the cork, and it looked straight up into the maiden's face ; and it also looked at the young sailor who sat beside her ; he was a friend of her childhood, the son of a portrait painter. He had just passed his examination for promotion with honour, and was to sail next day as mate on a long trip to foreign parts. There had been a good deal of talk about this journey during the packing, and while it was going on the expression in the eyes and on the mouth of the pretty girl had been anything but cheerful.

The two young people walked together in the wood, and talked to each other. What did they talk about ? Well, the bottle did not hear their conversation, for it was in the luncheon basket. It was a very long time before it was taken out, but when this did occur, it was evident that something pleasant had taken place. Everybody's eyes were beaming, and the furrier's daughter was laughing, but she talked less than the others, and her cheeks glowed like two red roses.

Father took up the bottle and the corkscrew—it was a curious sensation for the cork to be drawn from the bottle for the first time. The bottle neck never afterwards forgot the solemn moment when the cork flew out with a "kloop," and it gurgled when the wine flowed out of it into the glasses.

"The health of the betrothed," said father, and every glass was drained, while the young sailor kissed his bride.

"Health and happiness!" said both the old people. The young man filled the glasses again and drank to the "home-coming and the wedding this day year." When the glasses were emptied, he took the bottle and

held it up above his head. " You have shared my happiness to-day, and you shall serve nobody else," saying which he threw it up into the air.

The furrier's daughter little thought she was ever to see it again ; however this was to come to pass. It fell among the rushes by a little woodland lake. The bottle neck remembered distinctly how it lay there thinking over these events. " I gave them wine, and they gave me swamp water in return, but they meant it well." It could no longer see the betrothed pair or the joyous old people, but it could hear them for a long time gaily talking and singing.

After a time two little peasant boys came along peering among the reeds where they saw the bottle and took it away with them, so it was provided for.

At home in the forester's cottage where they lived, their eldest brother, who was a sailor, had been yesterday to take leave of them, as he was starting on a long voyage. Mother was now packing up a bundle of his things which father was to take to the town in the evening, when he went to see his son once more, and to take his mother's last greeting.

A little bottle had already been filled with spiced brandy, and was just being put into the bundle when the two boys came in with the other larger bottle they had found. This one would hold so much more than the little one, and this was all the better, for it was such a splendid cure for a chill. It was no longer red wine like the last which was put into the bottle, but bitter drops ; however, these were good for the stomach. The large new bottle was to go, and not the little one ; so once more the bottle started on a new journey.

It was taken on board the ship to Peter Jensen, and it was the very same ship in which the young mate was to sail. But the mate did not see the bottle, and even if he had he would not have known it.

Certainly it no longer contained wine, but there

was something just as good in it. Whenever Peter Jensen brought it out, his shipmates dubbed it, "the apothecary." It contained good physic, and cured all their complaints as long as there was a drop left in it.

A long time passed and it stood in a corner empty, when something happened—whether it was on the outward or the homeward journey the bottle did not know, for it had not been ashore.

A storm rose, great waves dark and heavy poured over the vessel and tossed it up and down. The masts were broken, and one heavy sea made the ship spring a leak; the pumps refused to work, and it was a pitch dark night. The ship sank, but at the last moment the young mate wrote upon a scrap of paper, "In the name of Jesus, we are going down!" He wrote the name of his bride, his own, and that of the ship, put the paper into an empty bottle he saw, hammered in the cork, and threw it out into the boiling, seething waters. He did not know that it was the very bottle from which he had poured the draught of joy and hope for her and for himself. Now it swayed up and down upon the waves with farewells and a message of death.

The ship sank, and the crew with it, but the bottle floated like a bird, for it had a heart in it, you know—a lover's letter. The sun rose and the sun set and looked to the bottle just like the glowing furnace in its earliest days, when it had a longing to leap back again. It went through calms and storms; it never struck against any rock, nor was it ever followed by sharks; it drifted about for more than a year and a day, first towards north and then towards south, just as the current drove it. It was otherwise entirely its own master, but one may get tired even of that.

The written paper, the last farewell from the bridegroom to the bride, could only bring grief, if it ever came into the right hands; but where were those hands, the ones which had shone so white when they spread the cloth upon the fresh grass in the green woods

on the day of the betrothal? Where was the furrier's daughter? Nay, where was the land, and which land lay nearest?

All this the bottle knew not; it drifted and drifted, till at last it was sick of drifting about; it had never been its own intention, but all the same it had to drift till at last it reached land—a strange land. It did not understand a word that was said; it was not the language it was accustomed to hear, and one loses much if one does not understand the language.

The bottle was picked up and looked at, the bit of paper inside was inspected, turned and twisted, but they did not understand what was written on it. They saw that the bottle had been thrown overboard, and that something about it was written on the paper, but what it was, this was the remarkable part. So it was put into the bottle again, and this was put into a large cupboard in a large room in a large house.

Every time a stranger came the slip of paper was taken out, turned and twisted, so that the writing which was only in pencil became more and more illegible. At last it was impossible even to make out the letters. The bottle stood in the cupboard for another year, then it was put into the lumber-room, where it was soon hidden with dust and spiders' webs; then it used to think of the better days when it went to the picnic in the wood, and when it danced on the waves and carried a secret—a letter, a farewell sigh—within it.

Now it stood in the attic for twenty years, and it might have stood there longer, if the house had not been rebuilt. The roof was torn off, the bottle was seen and remarked upon, but it did not understand the language; one does not learn that by standing in a lumber-room, even for twenty years. "Had I remained downstairs," it thought indeed, "I should have learned it fast enough!"

Now it was washed and thoroughly rinsed out, a process which it sorely needed; it became quite clear

and transparent, and felt youthful again in its old age. The slip of paper it had contained within it so long had vanished in the rinsing.

The bottle was filled with seed corn, a sort of thing it knew nothing at all about. Then it was well corked and wrapped up tightly, so that it could neither see the light of lantern or candle, far less the sun or the moon—and one really ought to see something when one goes on a journey, thought the bottle. However, it saw nothing, but it did the most important thing required of it: that was to arrive at its destination, and there it was unpacked.

"What trouble these foreigners have taken with it!" was said, "but I daresay it is cracked all the same." However, it was not cracked. The bottle understood every single word that was said, it was all spoken in the language it had heard at the smelting furnace, at the wine merchant's, in the wood, and on board ship—the one and only good old language which it thoroughly understood. It had come home again to its own country, where it had a hearty welcome in the mother-tongue.

It nearly sprang out of the people's hands from very joy; it hardly noticed the cork being drawn. Then it was well shaken to empty it, and put away in the cellar to be kept and also forgotten. There is no place like home, even if it be a cellar. It never occurred to the bottle to think how long it lay there, but it lay there comfortably for many years; then one day some people came down and took away all the bottles, and our adventurer among them.

In the garden outside everything was very festive. There were festoons of lamps and transparent paper lanterns like tulips. It was a clear and lovely evening; the stars shone brightly, and the slim crescent of the new moon was just up; in fact, the whole moon, like a pale grey globe, was visible with a golden rim to the half of it. It was a beautiful sight for good eyes.

There were also some illuminations in the side-paths, enough, at any rate, to see one's way about. Bottles were placed at intervals in the hedges, each with a lighted candle in it, and among them stood our bottle too, the one we know, which was to end its days as a bottle neck for a bird's drinking fountain.

Everything here appeared lovely to the bottle, for it was again in the green wood and taking part once more in merrymaking and gaiety. It heard music and singing once again, and the hum and buzz of many people, especially from that corner of the garden where the lanterns shone and the paper lamps gave their coloured light.

The bottle was only placed in one of the side-walks, but even there it had food for reflection. There it stood bearing its light aloft ; it was being of some use as well as giving pleasure, and that was the right thing—in such an hour one forgets all about the twenty years passed in an attic—and it is good sometimes to forget.

A couple of persons passed close by it, arm in arm, like the betrothed pair in the woods, the sailor and the *furrier's daughter*. The bottle *felt as if it were living* its life over again. The guests walked about in the garden, and other people too, who had come to look at them and at the illuminations. Among them there was an old maid who was without kith or kin, but not friendless. She was thinking of the very same thing as the bottle : of the green wood and of a young pair very dear to her, as she herself was one of them. It had been her happiest hour, and that one never forgets, however old a spinster one may be. But she did not know the bottle, and it did not know her again ; thus people pass one another in the world—till one meets again like these two who were now in the same town.

The bottle was taken from the garden to the wine merchant's, where it was again filled with wine and sold to an aeronaut who next Sunday was to make an

ascent in a balloon. A crowd of people came to look on ; there was a regimental band and many preparations. The bottle saw everything from a basket, where it lay in company with a living rabbit, which was much depressed, for it knew it was being taken up to be sent down in a parachute.

The bottle knew nothing at all about it ; it only saw that the balloon was being distended to a great size, and when it could not get any bigger it began to rise higher and higher, and to become very restive. The ropes which held it were then cut, and it ascended with the aeronaut, basket, bottle, and rabbit. There was a grand clashing of music, and the people shouted "Hurrah ! "

" It is a curious sensation to go up into the air like this ! " thought the bottle. " It's a new kind of sailing, and there can't be any danger of a collision up here ! "

Several thousands of persons watched the balloon, and among them the old maid. She stood by her open window, where the cage hung with the little linnet, which at that time had no drinking fountain, but had to content itself with a cup. A myrtle stood in a pot in the window, and it was moved a little to one side so as not to be knocked over when the old maid leant out to look at the balloon.

She could see the aeronaut quite plainly when he let the rabbit down in the parachute ; then he drank the health of the people, after which he threw the bottle high up into the air. Little did she think that she had seen the same bottle fly into the air above her and her lover on that happy day in the woods in her youth.

The bottle had no time to think, it was so taken by surprise at finding itself suddenly thus at the zenith of its career. The church steeples and house-tops lay far, far below, and the people looked quite tiny. The bottle sank with far greater rapidity than the rabbit, and on the way it turned several somersaults in the

air—it felt so youthful, so exhilarated. But not for long did it feel so.

What a journey it had! The sun shone upon the bottle, and all the people watched its flight; the balloon was already far away, and the bottle was soon lost to sight too. It fell upon a roof, where it was smashed to pieces, but there was such an impetus on the bits that they could not lie where they fell; they jumped and rolled till they reached the yard, where they lay in still smaller bits: only the neck was whole, and that might have been cut off with a diamond.

“That would do very well for a bird’s drinking fountain!” said the man who lived in the basement; but he had neither bird nor cage, and it would have been too much to procure these merely because he had found a bottle neck which would do for a drinking fountain. The old maid in the attic might find a use for it, so the bottle neck found its way up there. It had a cork put into it, and what had been the top became the bottom; fresh water was put into it, and it was hung outside the cage of the little bird which sang so merrily.

“Yes, you may well sing!” was what the bottle neck said; and it was looked upon as very remarkable, for it had been up in a balloon. Nothing more was known of its history. There it hung now as a drinking fountain, where it could hear the roll and the rumble in the streets below, and it could also hear the old maid talking in the room. She had a friend with her, and they were talking about the myrtle in the window.

“You must certainly not spend five shillings on a bridal bouquet for your daughter,” said the old maid. “I will give you a beauty covered with blossom. Do you see how beautifully my myrtle is blooming. Why, it is a cutting from the plant you gave me on the day after my betrothal; the one I was to have had for my bouquet when the year was out—the day which never

came ! Before then the eyes which would have gladdened and cherished me in this life were closed. He sleeps sweetly in the depths of the ocean—my beloved ! The tree grew old, but I grew older, and when it drooped I took the last fresh branch and planted it in the earth, where it has grown to such a big plant. So it will take part in a wedding after all and furnish a bouquet for your daughter ! ”

There were tears in the old maid’s eyes as she spoke of her betrothal in the wood. She thought about the toasts which had been drunk, and about the first kiss—but of these she did not speak : was she not an old maid !

Of all the thoughts that came into her mind this one never came : that just outside her window was a relic of those days—the neck of the bottle out of which the cork came with a pop when it was drawn on the betrothal day. The bottle neck did not recognize her either—in fact, it was not listening to her conversation, because it was only thinking about itself.

HANS ANDERSEN.

The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story

“ DIDN’T the Fox *never* catch the Rabbit, Uncle Remus ? ” asked the little boy the next evening.

“ He come mighty nigh it, honey, sho’s you bawn—Brer Fox did. One day arter Brer Rabbit fool ‘im wid dat calamus root, Brer Fox went ter wuk en got ‘im some tar, en mix it wid some turkentine, en fix up a contrapshun what he call a Tar-Baby ; en he tuck dis yer Tar-Baby en he set ‘er in de big road, en den he lay off in de bushes fer ter see wat de news wuz gwine ter be. En he didn’t hatter wait long, nudder, kaze bimeby here come Brer Rabbit pacin’ down de road—lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity—dez ez sassy ez a jay-bird. Brer Fox, he lay low. Brer Rabbit

come prancin' 'long twel he spy de Tar-Baby, en den he fotch up on his behime legs like he wuz 'stonished. De Tar-Baby, she sot dar, she did, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“ ‘ Mawnin’ I’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee—‘ nice wedder dis mawnin’,’ sezee.

“ Tar-Baby ain’t sayin’ nuthin’, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“ ‘ How duz yo’ sym’tums seem ter segashuate ? ’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee.

“ Brer Fox, he wink his eye slow, en lay low, en de Tar-Baby, she ain’t sayin’ nuthin’.

“ ‘ How you come on, den ? Is you deaf ? ’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. ‘ Kaze if you is, I kin holler louder,’ sezee.

“ Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“ ‘ Youer stuck up, dat’s w’at you is,’ says Brer Rabbit, sezee, ‘ en I’m gwineter kyore you, dat’s w’at I’m a-gwineter do,’ sezee.

“ Brer Fox, he sorter chuckle in his stummuck, he did, but Tar-Baby ain’t sayin’ nuthin’.

“ ‘ I’m gwineter larn you howter talk ter ’specttubble fokes ef hit’s de las’ ack,’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee. ‘ Ef you don’t take off dat hat en tell me howdy, I’m gwineter bus’ you wide open,’ sezee.

“ Tar-Baby stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“ Brer Rabbit keep on axin’ ‘im, en de Tar-Baby, she keep on sayin’ nuthin’, twel present’y Brer Rabbit draw back wid his fis’, he did, en blip he tuck ‘er side er de head. Right dar’s whar he broke his merlasses jug. His fis’ stuck, en he can’t pull loose. De tar hilt ‘im. But Tar-Baby, she stay still, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“ ‘ Ef you don’t lemme loose, I’ll knock you agin,’ sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, en wid dat he fotch ‘er a wipe wid de udder han’, en dat stuck. Tar-Baby, she ain’t sayin’ nuthin’, en Brer Fox, he lay low.

“ ‘ Tu’n me loose, ’fo’ I kick de natal stuffin’ outen

you,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee; but de Tar-Baby, she ain't sayin' nuthin'. She des hilt on, en den Brer Rabbit lose de use er his feet in de same way. Brer Fox, he lay low. Den Brer Rabbit squall out dat ef de Tar-Baby don't tu'n 'im loose he butt 'er cranksided. En den he butted, en his head got stuck. Den Brer Fox, he sa'ntered fort', lookin' des ez innercent ez wunner yo' mammy's mockin'-birds.

"Howdy, Brer Rabbit," sez Brer Fox, sezee. "You look sorter stuck up dis mawnin'," sezee, en den he rolled on de groun', en laft en laft twel he couldn't laff no mo'. "I speck you'll take dinner wid me dis time, Brer Rabbit. I done laid in some calamus root, en I ain't gwinter take no skuse," sez Brer Fox, sezee."

Here Uncle Remus paused, and drew a two-pound yam out of the ashes.

"Did the Fox eat the Rabbit?" asked the little boy to whom the story had been told.

"Dat's all de fur de tale goes," replied the old man. "He mout, en den agin he moutent. Some say Jedge B'ar come 'long en loosed 'im; some say he didn't. I hear Miss Sally callin'. You better run 'long."

"Uncle Remus," said the little boy one evening, when he had found the old man with little or nothing to do, "did the Fox kill and eat the Rabbit when he caught him with the Tar-Baby?"

"Law, honey, ain't I tell you 'bout dat?" replied the old darkey, chuckling slyly. "I 'clar' ter grashus I oughter tolle you dat, but ole man Nod wuz ridin' on my eyeleds twel a lectle mo'n I'd a dis'member'd my own name, en den on to dat here come yo' mammy holler'n atter you.

"W'at I tell you w'en I fus' begin? I tolle you Brer Rabbit wuz a monstus soon beas'; leas'ways dat's w'at I laid out fer ter tell you. Well, den, honey, don't you go en make no udde r kalkalashuns, kaze in

dem days Brer Rabbit en his fambly wuz at de head er de gang w'en enny racket wuz on han', en dar dey stayed. 'Fo' you begins fer ter wipe yo' eyes 'bout Brer Rabbit, you wait en see whar'bouts Brer Rabbit gwineter fetch up at. But dat's needer yer ner dar.

" W'en Brer Fox fine Brer Rabbit mixt up wid de Tar-Baby, he feel mighty good, en he roll on de groun' en laff. Bimeby, he up'n say, sezee :

" ' Well, I speck I got you dis time, Brer Rabbit,' sezee ; ' maybe I ain't, but I speck I is. You been runnin' roun' here sassin' atter me a mighty long time, but I speck you done come ter de een' er de row. You bin cuttin' up yo' capers en bouncin' roun' in dis nabehood ontwel you cum ter b'lieve yo'se'f de boss er de whole gang. En den youer allers some'rs whar you got no bizness,' sez Brer Fox, sezee. ' Who ax you fer ter come en strike up a 'quaintence wid dish yer Tar-Baby ? En who stuck you up dar whar you iz ? Nobody in de roun' worril. You des tuck en jam yo'se'f on dat Tar-Baby widout waitin' fer enny invite,' sez Brer Fox, sezee ; ' en dar you is, en dar you'll stay twel I fixes up a bresh-pile and fiers her up, kaze I'm gwineter bobbycue you dis day, sho', sez Brer Fox, sezee.

" Den Brer Rabbit talk mighty 'umble.

" ' I don't keer w'at you do wid me, Brer Fox,' sezee, ' so you don't fling me in dat brier-patch. Roas' me, Brer Fox,' sezee, ' but don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

" ' Hit's so much trouble fer ter kindle a fier,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, ' dat I speck I'll hatter hang you,' sezee.

" ' Hang me des ez high ez you please, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, ' but don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

" ' I ain't got no string,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, ' en now I speck I'll hatter drown you,' sezee.

" ' Drown me des ez deep ez you please, Brer Fox,'

sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'but don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

" 'Dey ain't no water nigh,' sez Brer Fox, sezee, 'en now I speck I'll hatter skin you,' sezee.

" 'Skin me, Brer Fox,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee, 'snatch out my eyeballs, t'ar out my years by de roots, en cut off my legs,' sezee, 'but do please, Brer Fox, don't fling me in dat brier-patch,' sezee.

" Co'se Brer Fox wanter hurt Brer Rabbit bad ez he kin, so he cotch 'im by de behime legs en slung 'im right in de middle er de brier-patch. Dar wuz a considerbul flutter whar Brer Rabbit struck de bushes, en Brer Fox sorter hang 'roun' fer ter see w'at wuz gwineter happen. Bimeby he hear somebody call 'im, en 'way up de hill he see Brer Rabbit settin' cross-legged on a chinkapin log, koamin' de pitch outen his h'ar wid a chip. Den Brer Fox know dat he bin swop off mighty bad. Brer Rabbit wuz bleedzd for ter fling back some er his sass, en he holler out:

" 'Bred en bawn in a brier-patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a brier-patch ! ' en wid dat he skip out des ez lively ez a cricket in de embers."

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS: *Uncle Remus—Legends of the Old Plantation.*

Blanca Flor

THE STORY OF THE WHITE FLOWER AS TOLD BY
JOSÉ VELEZ OF HUELVA

ONCE upon a time there lived a prince who was very fond of hunting in the vast forests of his father's kingdom. One day, having separated from his companions, he lost his way and strayed without knowing it to the borders of his kingdom.

Evening was drawing in. He wandered long, hoping to find a cottage or dwelling of some sort where he could find shelter for the night, then found himself

on the outskirts of the forest, looking on to a land that was quite unknown to him. At his feet flowed a river, its ripples reflecting the sun's last rays. On its bosom floated three white doves.

On the fine silver sand of the shore lay something white and glistening, which the prince picked up to examine. It was a very fine white garment, delicately woven and worked, and while he fingered it, wondering to whom this fairy-like garment could belong, he heard a voice say :

“ Oh, Prince Reinaldo, give me back my robe.”

There was a house on the opposite bank of the river, but too far away for the speaker of these words to be in it. Reinaldo looked round, and saw nothing but one of the white doves perched on the branch of a tree at the water's edge. The others were gone.

“ It is I who am speaking to you,” said the dove. “ My name is Blanca Flor, and that is my robe you have in your hand. I took it off to bathe in the river. Give it back to me, prince.”

The prince threw the garment over the bird, and the next minute there stood before him the loveliest girl he had ever seen. He was speechless with surprise and pleasure.

“ Fear nothing, Prince Reinaldo,” she said. “ For your service to me I am willing to serve you in return, and you will need my help, for you have wandered on to the land of my father, who is a magician and who tolerates no stranger here. He will seek to do you harm.”

“ What shall I do, fair Blanca Flor ? ” asked the prince. “ And where shall I find a night's shelter ? ”

“ You will find it in my father's cottage,” said Blanca Flor. “ Knock boldly at the door. Show no sign of fear, and when he takes you in and offers you food, refuse all that is white and ask him for black instead. With that you will sleep safely till dawn, and I'll be with you in the morning.”

Reinaldo forded the river and knocked at the cottage door, which was opened by an old man with a forbidding expression.

"Will you give me a night's shelter, good man?" asked the prince.

"They must pay for their lodging who shelter under my roof," said the magician. "If you can do that, step in and rest."

Then he hobbled away and came back with a white loaf and a bottle of white wine.

"Nay," said Reinaldo, "a piece of black bread for me and a drink of dark wine if you have it."

The magician scowled, but gave him what he asked. Reinaldo supped, then went to bed, where he slept soundly after his hard day.

Next morning the magician woke him.

"Now you must pay for your lodging, Prince Reinaldo," he said. "Look out of the window. Do you see yonder hill? Well, I want you to level it with the ground, plant a wheatfield and a vineyard on the place where it stood, by midday, and bring me a loaf made of the wheat and a flask of wine made of the grapes grown there, by to-morrow's dawn."

"That is a hard task," said the prince in dismay.

"Very hard," said the magician. "But you must pay for your lodging or forfeit your life."

The poor prince was in despair and did not know what to do. But the moment the magician had left the room, through the open window floated the white dove and alighted on his hand.

"I am Blanca Flor," she said. "I have come to help you with the task my father set you. Lie down and go to sleep again and put all your trust in me. When midday comes my father will return. You must rise from your sleep and tell him that the first part of the task is done."

It was with a heavy heart and full of foreboding

that Reinaldo lay down, but a deep sleep overcame him, in which he dreamed he saw millions of tiny dwarf workmen with picks and shovels levelling the mountain till it was as flat as a plain.

At midday a loud knock at the door roused him. It was the magician who came in, dark as thunder and muttering like it.

"You sleep heavily after your hard work," he growled, "but the task is only half done, prince. Now for the rest of it."

Through the open window Reinaldo saw that where the mountain had been was now a plain.

When the magician had gone the dove again flew in at the open window.

"Have I not kept my promise, Prince Reinaldo? Now rest peacefully this night, and in the dawn I shall be with you again to tell you the task is complete."

That night the prince dreamed that he saw millions of dwarf workmen ploughing, sowing, and reaping the wheatfield, planting and tending the vines, gathering the grapes and pressing them into wine.

In the dawn the white dove alighted on his pillow and woke him.

"Here, Prince Reinaldo, is the loaf and the flask of wine to give my father."

"A thousand thanks, dear Blanca Flor. How can I ever repay you?"

"You can repay me," said the dove. "What you must now do is to kill me. You must cut me into little bits and throw me into the river."

"I could not do anything so dreadful," said the prince.

"But you must," persisted Blanca Flor. "It is the only way in which I can permanently regain my human form and destroy the enchantment my father has thrown over me."

Very grieved was Prince Reinaldo to perform this

dreadful task. His hands trembled so much that he dropped one tiny bit in the sand of the river shore and did not notice what he had done.

Meanwhile the magician was furious at the way in which he had been outwitted, though he pretended to be pleased.

"There is still something that I want you to do, prince," he said. "I have three daughters, the fairest and cleverest of whom is the youngest, Blanca Flor. I am going to shut them in the next room, and each one is to thrust her finger through the keyhole and you are to tell which is that of Blanca Flor."

Prince Reinaldo knitted his brow in perplexity. The magician's task was indeed a difficult one, and there would be no way of solving it unless Blanca Flor again came to his aid. As if in answer to his thought the door opened and the fair girl glided in, dressed in the glistening white robe in which he had first seen her. She came towards him smiling and holding out her little white hand.

"See, Prince Reinaldo, what you have done to me!"

He saw that a tiny bit was missing from the end of her first finger, as if it had been chopped off.

"You dropped a piece in the sand," she said. "But never mind. This is the finger that I shall put through the keyhole."

And thus it was. When the magician saw that he had been tricked he was furious, but he managed to conceal his rage and speak pleasantly enough.

"Ah, I see you are too clever for me. You are free and may go home, prince. But it is late now and you would have to travel in the dark. Bide till the morning and I'll give you the finest charger in my stable to take you home."

The prince thanked him, and they all retired to rest. But no sooner had he shut his door than there was a gentle tap on it, and there was Blanca Flor.

"You must fly for your life," she said. "My

father contemplates treachery, and if you remain here you will never see another dawn."

"Fly for my life and leave you!" cried the prince. "That will I never do, dearest Blanca Flor. I must take you with me and you shall be my queen. Does he suspect that you have helped me?"

"He does," said Blanca Flor, "and his vengeance will certainly follow. Let us make ready to go. In the stable you will see a dozen sleek, beautiful animals. Pass them all. But at the far end are a sorry pair of broken-down hacks. The first is lame and broken-winded, but he goes swifter than the wind. His companion looks worse still, but he goes swifter than thought, and it is he whom you must choose."

Reinaldo went accordingly and saddled the wretched horse, which he found exactly as Blanca Flor had described. Then he lifted her on to the saddle before him, and they rode away into the night.

But before she left the house Blanca Flor pricked her finger and let three drops of blood fall on the window-sill. Then she locked the door.

Presently the magician came to the prince's door and knocked.

"Open the door, Prince Reinaldo."

And the first drop of blood answered :

"Wait a minute till I strike a light."

The magician waited a little, then called :

"Open the door, Prince Reinaldo."

The second drop of blood spoke, saying :

"Wait till I find my shoes."

The magician waited with growing impatience, then called again :

"Open the door, Prince Reinaldo."

And the third drop of blood answered :

"I have not finished dressing yet."

The next time the magician spoke there was no answer, and he kicked the door open, to find the room empty.

Meanwhile the fugitives had travelled far, but presently Blanca Flor said to her lover :

"I hear the trampling of hoofs behind us, and they are gaining on us. It is my father in pursuit."

She took a comb out of her hair and threw it behind her and it became an impenetrable thicket full of thorns and prickly bushes, which kept the magician back for a bit, while the prince and his bride sped on on the horse that went swifter than thought.

But again Blanca Flor said : "I hear the trampling of horses' hoofs behind us, and they are gaining on us."

This time she took a little mirror from her pocket and threw it behind her, and it became a great lake with a surface like a mirror, but deep and chill. When the magician came to this he was not able to cross it, because there was running water in it and his power stopped there.

So he had reluctantly to turn back.

While he was doing this the prince and Blanca Flor had crossed the boundary into his own kingdom and were on a well-remembered road leading to his own city, where the king and queen met them with a great welcome.

Then Prince Reinaldo married his beautiful Blanca Flor, and never to the end of his days forgot how she had helped and saved him, and their days were spent in gladness to the very end.

Spanish Folk-tale.

Rip Van Winkle

WHOEVER has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country. Every change of season, every change of

weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains, and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines on the clear evening sky ; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of grey vapours about their summits, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village whose shingle roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weather-cocks.

In that same village and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten) there lived, many years since, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple, good-natured man ; he was, moreover, a kind neighbour, and an obedient, hen-pecked husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance

might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad who are under the discipline of shrews at home. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice blessed.

Certain it is that he was a great favourite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex, took his part in all family squabbles; and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them hanging on his skirts, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighbourhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labour. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble. He would carry a fowling-piece on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbour even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn or building stone fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a

word, Rip was ready to attend to anybody's business but his own ; but as to doing family duty, and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm ; it was the most pestilent little piece of ground in the whole country ; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces ; his cow would either go astray or get among the cabbages ; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else ; the rain always made a point of setting in just as he had some outdoor work to do ; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin born in his own likeness, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in his father's cast-off clothes, which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy, eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment ; but his wife kept continually dinging in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged

his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his wife ; so that he was fain to draw off his forces and take to the outside of the house—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a henpecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent was his dog Wolf, who was as much henpecked as his master ; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honourable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods—but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a sidelong glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on ; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village ; which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his Majesty George the Third.

Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveller. How

solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary ; and how sagely they would deliberate upon public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch of the village and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree ; so that the neighbours could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sundial. It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent, and angry puffs, but when pleased he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds ; and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapour curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and call the members all to naught ; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago, who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair ; and his only alternative, to escape from the labour of the farm and clamour of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share

the contents of his wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favourite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned the brow of a precipice. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and slagged, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing, "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!" He looked round, but could see nothing

but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air: "Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!"—at the same time Wolf bristled up his back, and giving a loud growl, skulked to his master's side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented place; but supposing it to be some one of the neighbourhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair and a grizzled beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion—a cloth jerkin, strapped round the waist—several pair of knickerbockers, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg, that seemed full of liquor, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity; and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent.

As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he pro-

ceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheatre, surrounded by perpendicular precipices, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had laboured on in silence, for though the former marvelled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain, yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown that inspired awe and checked familiarity.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the centre was a company of odd-looking personages playing at ninepins. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short doublets, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous knickerbockers, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages, too, were peculiar; one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards of various shapes and colours. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting, in the parlour of Dominie Van Shaick, the village parson, which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal, the most

melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play, and stared at him with such fixed, statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-lustre countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the flavour of excellent Hollands. He was naturally a thirsty soul, and was soon tempted to repeat the draught. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. "Surely," thought Rip, "I have not slept here all night." He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild retreat among the rocks—the woebegone party at ninepins—the flagon—"Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!" thought Rip; "what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?"

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel incrusted with rust, the lock falling off, and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that the grave roysters of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening's gambol, and, if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. "These mountain beds do not agree with me," thought Rip; "and if this frolic should lay me up with a fit of the rheumatism, I shall have a blessed time with Dame Van Winkle." With some difficulty he got down into the glen: he found the gully up which he and his companion had ascended the preceding evening; but, to his astonishment, a mountain stream was now foaming down it—leaping from rock to rock, and filling the glen with babbling murmurs. He, however, made shift to scramble up its sides, working his toilsome way through thickets of birch, sassafras, and witch-hazel, and sometimes tripped up or entangled by the wild grape-vines that twisted their coils or tendrils from tree to tree, and spread a kind of network in his path.

At length he reached to where the ravine had opened through the cliffs to the amphitheatre; but no traces of such opening remained. The rocks presented a high impenetrable wall, over which the torrent came tumbling in a sheet of feathery foam, and fell into a broad, deep basin, black from the shadows of the surrounding forest. Here, then, poor Rip was brought to a stand. He again called and whistled after his dog;

he was only answered by the cawing of a flock of idle crows, sporting high in air about a dry tree that overhung a sunny precipice ; and who, secure in their elevation, seemed to look down and scoff at the poor man's perplexities. What was to be done ?—the morning was passing away, and Rip felt famished for want of his breakfast. He grieved to give up his dog and his gun ; he dreaded to meet his wife ; but it would not do to starve among the mountains. He shook his head, shouldered the rusty firelock, and, with a heart full of trouble and anxiety, turned his steps homeward.

As he approached the village he met a number of people, but none whom he knew, which somewhat surprised him, for he had thought himself acquainted with every one in the country round. Their dress, too, was of a different fashion from that to which he was accustomed. They all stared at him with equal marks of surprise, and, whenever they cast their eyes upon him, invariably stroked their chins. The constant recurrence of this gesture induced Rip, involuntarily, to do the same—when, to his astonishment, he found his beard had grown a foot long !

He had now entered the skirts of the village. A troop of strange children ran at his heels, hooting after him, and pointing at his grey beard. The dogs, too, not one of which he recognized for an old acquaintance, barked at him as he passed. The very village was altered ; it was larger and more populous. There were rows of houses which he had never seen before, and those which had been his familiar haunts had disappeared. Strange names were over the doors—strange faces at the windows—everything was strange. His mind now misgave him ; he began to doubt whether both he and the world around him were not bewitched. Surely this was his native village, which he had left but the day before. There stood the Kaatskill mountains—there ran the silver Hudson at a distance—there was every hill and dale precisely as

it had always been. Rip was sorely perplexed. "That flagon last night," thought he, "has addled my poor head sadly!"

It was with some difficulty that he found the way to his own house, which he approached with silent awe, expecting every moment to hear the shrill voice of Dame Van Winkle. He found the house gone to decay—the roof fallen in, the windows shattered, and the doors off the hinges. A half-starved dog that looked like Wolf was skulking about it. Rip called him by name, but the cur snarled, showed his teeth, and passed on. This was an unkind cut indeed—"My very dog," sighed poor Rip, "has forgotten me!"

He entered the house, which, to tell the truth, Dame Van Winkle had always kept in neat order. It was empty, forlorn, and apparently abandoned. The desolateness overcame all his fears—he called loudly for his wife and children—the lonely chambers rang for a moment with his voice, and then all again was silence.

He now hurried forth, and hastened to his old resort, the village inn—but it too was gone. A large, rickety, wooden building stood in its place, with great gaping windows, some of them broken and mended with old hats and petticoats, and over the door was painted, "The Union Hotel, by Jonathan Doolittle." Instead of the great tree that used to shelter the quiet little Dutch inn of yore, there was now reared a tall naked pole, with something on the top that looked like a red nightcap, and from it was fluttering a flag, on which was a singular assemblage of stars and stripes—all this was strange and incomprehensible. He recognized on the sign, however, the ruby face of King George, under which he had smoked so many a peaceful pipe; but even this was singularly metamorphosed. The red coat was changed for one of blue and buff, a sword was held in the hand instead of a

sceptre, the head was decorated with a cocked hat, and underneath was painted in large characters, GENERAL WASHINGTON.

There was, as usual, a crowd of folks about the door, but none that Rip recollects. The very character of the people seemed changed. There was a busy, bustling, disputatious tone about it, instead of the accustomed phlegm and drowsy tranquillity. He looked in vain for the sage Nicholas Vedder, with his broad face, double chin, and fair long pipe, uttering clouds of tobacco smoke instead of idle speeches; or Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, doling forth the contents of an ancient newspaper. In place of these, a lean, bilious-looking fellow, with his pockets full of handbills, was haranguing vehemently about rights of citizens—elections—members of Congress—liberty—Bunker's Hill—heroes of seventy-six—and other words, which were a perfect Babylonish jargon to the bewildered Van Winkle.

The appearance of Rip, with his long grizzled beard, his rusty fowling-piece, his uncouth dress, and an army of women and children at his heels, soon attracted the attention of the tavern politicians. They crowded round him, eyeing him from head to foot with great curiosity. The orator hustled up to him, and, drawing him partly aside, inquired “on which side he voted?” Rip stared in vacant stupidity. Another short but busy little fellow pulled him by the arm, and, rising on tiptoe, inquired in his ear, “Whether he was Federal or Democrat?” Rip was equally at a loss to comprehend the question; when a knowing, self-important old gentleman, in a sharp cocked hat, made his way through the crowd, putting them to the right and left with his elbows as he passed, and planting himself before Van Winkle, with one arm akimbo, the other resting on his cane, his keen eyes and sharp hat penetrating, as it were, into his very soul, demanded in an austere tone, “What brought him to the election

with a gun on his shoulder and a mob at his heels, and whether he meant to breed a riot in the village"?"—
 "Alas! gentlemen," cried Rip, somewhat dismayed,
 "I am a poor quiet man, a native of the place, and a
 loyal subject of the king, God bless him!"

Here a general shout burst from the bystanders—
 "A tory! a tory! a spy! a refugee! hustle him! away with him!" It was with great difficulty that the self-important man in the cocked hat restored order; and, having assumed a tenfold austerity of brow, demanded again of the unknown culprit, what he came there for, and whom he was seeking? The poor man humbly assured him that he meant no harm, but merely came there in search of some of his neighbours, who used to keep about the tavern.

"Well—who are they?—name them."

Rip bethought himself a moment, and inquired,
 "Where's Nicholas Vedder?"

There was a silence for a little while, when an old man replied in a thin, piping voice, "Nicholas Vedder! why, he is dead and gone these eighteen years! There was a wooden tombstone in the churchyard that used to tell all about him, but that's rotten and gone too."

"Where's Brom Dutcher?"

"Oh, he went off to the army in the beginning of the war; some say he was killed at the storming of Stony Point—others say he was drowned in a squall at the foot of Antony's Nose. I don't know—he never came back again."

"Where's Van Bummel, the schoolmaster?"

"He went off to the wars too, was a great militia general, and is now in Congress."

Rip's heart died away at hearing of these sad changes in his home and friends, and finding himself thus alone in the world. Every answer puzzled him, too, by treating of such enormous lapses of time, and of matters which he could not understand; war—Congress—Stony Point;—he had no courage to ask

after any more friends, but cried out in despair, " Does nobody here know Rip Van Winkle ? "

" Oh, Rip Van Winkle ! " exclaimed two or three. " Oh, to be sure ! that's Rip Van Winkle yonder, leaning against the tree."

Rip looked, and beheld a precise counterpart of himself, as he went up the mountain ; apparently as lazy, and certainly as ragged. The poor fellow was now completely confounded. He doubted his own identity, and whether he was himself or another man. In the midst of his bewilderment, the man in the cocked hat demanded who he was, and what was his name ?

" God knows," exclaimed he, at his wits' end ; " I'm not myself—I'm somebody else—that's me yonder—no—that's somebody else got into my shoes—I was myself last night, but I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am ! "

The bystanders began now to look at each other, nod, wink significantly, and tap their fingers against their foreheads. There was a whisper, also, about securing the gun, and keeping the old fellow from doing mischief, at the very suggestion of which the self-important man in the cocked hat retired with some precipitation. At this critical moment a fresh, comely woman pressed through the throng to get a peep at the grey-bearded man. She had a chubby child in her arms, which, frightened at his looks, began to cry. " Hush, Rip," cried she, " hush, the old man won't hurt you." The name of the child, the air of the mother, the tone of her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind.

" What is your name, my good woman ? " asked he.

" Judith Gardenier."

" And your father's name ? "

" Ah, poor man, Rip Van Winkle was his name, but

it's twenty years since he went away from home with his gun, and never has been heard of since—his dog came home without him ; but whether he shot himself, or was carried away by the Indians, nobody can tell. I was then but a little girl."

Rip had but one question more to ask ; but he put it with a faltering voice :

" Where's your mother ? "

" Oh, she too had died but a short time since ; she broke a blood-vessel in a fit of passion at a New-England pedlar."

There was a drop of comfort, at least, in this intelligence. The honest man could contain himself no longer. He caught his daughter and her child in his arms. " I am your father ! " cried he—" Young Rip Van Winkle once—old Rip Van Winkle now !—Does nobody know poor Rip Van Winkle ? "

All stood amazed, until an old woman, tottering out from among the crowd, put her hand to her brow, and peering under it in his face for a moment, exclaimed, " Sure enough ! it is Rip Van Winkle—it is himself ! Welcome home again, old neighbour—Why, where have you been these twenty long years ? "

Rip's story was soon told, for the whole twenty years had been to him but as one night. The neighbours stared when they heard it ; some were seen to wink at each other, and put their tongues in their cheeks : and the self-important man in the cocked hat, who, when the alarm was over, had returned to the field, screwed down the corners of his mouth, and shook his head—upon which there was a general shaking of the head throughout the assemblage.

It was determined, however, to take the opinion of old Peter Vanderdonk, who was seen slowly advancing up the road. He was a descendant of the historian of that name, who wrote one of the earliest accounts of the province. Peter was the most ancient inhabitant of the village, and well versed in all the

wonderful events and traditions of the neighbourhood. He recollected Rip at once, and corroborated his story in the most satisfactory manner. He assured the company that it was a fact, handed down from his ancestor the historian, that the Kaatskill mountains had always been haunted by strange beings. That it was affirmed that the great Hendrick Hudson, the first discoverer of the river and country, kept a kind of vigil there every twenty years, with his crew of the *Half-moon*; being permitted in this way to revisit the scenes of his enterprise, and keep a guardian eye upon the river, and the great city called by his name. That his father had once seen them in their old Dutch dresses playing at ninepins in a hollow of the mountain; and that he himself had heard, one summer afternoon, the sound of their balls, like distant peals of thunder.

To make a long story short, the company broke up, and returned to the more important concerns of the election. Rip's daughter took him home to live with her; she had a snug, well-furnished house, and a stout cheery farmer for her husband, whom Rip recollected for one of the urchins that used to climb upon his back. As to Rip's son and heir, who was the ditto of himself, seen leaning against the tree, he was employed to work on the farm; but evinced an hereditary disposition to attend to anything else but his business.

Rip now resumed his old walks and habits; he soon found many of his former cronies, though all rather the worse for the wear and tear of time; and preferred making friends among the rising generation, with whom he soon grew into great favour.

Having nothing to do at home, and being arrived at that happy age when a man can be idle with impunity, he took his place once more on the bench at the inn door, and was reverenced as one of the patriarchs of the village, and a chronicle of the old times "before the war." It was some time before he

could get into the regular track of gossip, or could be made to comprehend the strange events that had taken place during his torpor. How that there had been a revolutionary war—that the country had thrown off the yoke of Old England—and that, instead of being a subject of His Majesty George the Third, he was now a free citizen of the United States. Rip, in fact, was no politician; the changes of states and empires made but little impression on him; but there was one species of despotism under which he had long groaned, and that was—petticoat government. Happily that was at an end; he had got his neck out of the yoke of matrimony, and could go in and out whenever he pleased without dreading the tyranny of Dame Van Winkle. Whenever her name was mentioned, however, he shook his head, shrugged his shoulders, and cast up his eyes; which might pass either for an expression of resignation to his fate, or joy at his deliverance.

He used to tell his story to every stranger that arrived at Mr. Doolittle's hotel. He was observed at first to vary on some points every time he told it, which was, doubtless, owing to his having so recently awaked. It at last settled down precisely to the tale I have related, and not a man, woman, or child in the neighbourhood but knew it by heart. Some always pretended to doubt the reality of it, and insisted that Rip had been out of his head, and that this was one point on which he always remained flighty. The old Dutch inhabitants, however, almost universally gave it full credit. Even to this day they never hear a thunderstorm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of ninepins; and it is a common wish of all henpecked husbands in the neighbourhood, when life hangs heavy on their hands, that they might have a quieting draught out of Rip Van Winkle's flagon.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

The Defeat of Time

TITANIA and her moonlight elves were assembled under the canopy of a huge oak, that served to shelter them from the moon's radiance, which, being now at her full, shot forth intolerable rays—intolerable, I mean, to the subtle texture of their little shadowy bodies—but dispensing an agreeable coolness to us grosser mortals.

An air of discomfort sate upon the queen and upon her courtiers. Their tiny friskings and gambols were forgot; and even Robin Goodfellow, for the first time in his little airy life, looked grave. For the queen had had melancholy forebodings of late, founded upon an ancient prophecy laid up in the records of Fairyland, that the date of fairy existence should be *then* extinct when men should cease to believe in them.¹

She knew how that the race of the Nymphs, which were her predecessors, and had been the guardians of the sacred floods, and of the silver fountains, and of the consecrated hills and woods, had utterly disappeared before the chilling touch of man's incredulity;² and she sighed bitterly at the approaching fate of herself and of her subjects, which was dependent upon so fickle a lease as the capricious and ever-mutable faith of man.

Then, as if to realize her fears, a melancholy shape came gliding in, and *that* was—Time, who with his intolerable scythe mows down kings and kingdoms; at whose dread approach the fays huddled together as a flock of timorous sheep; and the most courageous

¹ Barrie seems to have borrowed this idea for his Peter Pan. We read in *Peter and Wendy*:

"If you believe," Peter shouted to them, "clap your hands; don't let Tink die." Many clapped. Some didn't. A few little beasts hissed.

² Some writers and poets say that the nymphs, gods, and goddesses disappeared when Christianity began.

among them crept into acorn-cups, not enduring the sight of that ancientest of monarchs.

Titania's first impulse was to wish the presence of her false lord, King Oberon—who was far away, in the pursuit of a strange beauty, a fay of Indian Land—that with his good lance and sword, like a faithful knight and husband, he might defend her against Time. But she soon checked that thought as vain, for what could the prowess of the mighty Oberon himself, albeit the stoutest champion in Fairyland, have availed against so huge a giant, whose bald top touched the skies?

So, in the mildest tone, she besought the spectre that in his mercy he would overlook and pass by her small subjects, as too diminutive and powerless to add any worthy trophy to his renown. And she besought him to employ his resistless strength against the ambitious children of men, and to lay waste their aspiring works; to tumble down their towers and turrets, and the Babels of their pride—fit objects of his devouring scythe—but to spare her and her harmless race, who had no existence beyond a dream; frail objects of a creed that lived but in the faith of the believer.

And with her little arms, as well as she could, she grasped the stern knees of Time; and, waxing speechless with fear, she beckoned to her chief attendants and maids of honour to come forth from their hiding-places, and to plead the plea of the fairies. And one of those small, delicate creatures came forth at her bidding, clad all in white like a chorister, and in a low melodious tone, not louder than the hum of a pretty bee, set forth her humble petition.

“We fairies,” she said, “are the most inoffensive race that live, and least deserving to perish. It is we that have the care of all sweet melodies that no discords may offend the sun, who is the great soul of music. We rouse the lark at morn; and the pretty

Echoes, which respond to all the twittering choir, are of our making. Wherefore, great King of Years, if ever you have loved the music which is raining from a morning cloud sent from the messenger of day, the lark, as he mounts to heaven's gate, beyond the ken of mortals ; or if ever you have listened with a charmed ear to the nightbird, that—

‘ In the flowery spring,
Amidst the leaves set, makes the thickets ring
Of our sour sorrows, sweeten'd with her song —

spare our tender tribes, and we will muffle up the sheep-bell for thee, that thy pleasure take no interruption whenever thou shalt listen unto the nightingale.’

And Time answered that “ he had heard that song too long. But if she would know in what music Time delighted, it was, when sleep and darkness lay upon crowded cities, to hark to the midnight chime which is tolling from a hundred clocks, like the last knell over the soul of a dead world ; or to the crash of the fall of some age-worn edifice, which is as the voice of himself when he disparteth kingdoms.”

A second female fay took up the plea, and said, “ We be the handmaids of the Spring, and tend upon the birth of all sweet buds : and the pastoral cowslips are our friends ; and the pansies and the violets, like nuns ; and the quaking harebell is in our wardship ; and the hyacinth, once a fair youth, and dear to Phœbus, the god of the sun.”

Then Time made answer, in his wrath striking the harmless ground with his hurtful scythe, that “ they must not think that he was one that cared for flowers, except to see them wither, and to take her beauty from the rose.”

Next stood up a male fairy, clad all in green, like a forester or one of Robin Hood's mates, and, doffing his tiny cap, said, “ We are small foresters, that live in

woods, training the young boughs in graceful intricacies, with blue snatches of the sky between: we frame all shady roofs and arches rude; and sometimes, when we are plying our tender hatchets, men say that the tapping woodpecker is nigh. And it is we that scoop the hollow cell of the squirrel, and carve quaint letters upon the rinds of trees, which in sylvan solitudes sweetly recall to the mind of the heat-oppressed swain, ere he lies down to slumber, the name of his fair one, dainty Aminta, gentle Rosalind, or chasteest Laura, as it may happen."

Saturn, nothing moved with this courteous address, bade him begone, or "if he would be a woodman, to go forth and fell oak for the fairies' coffins which would forthwith be wanting. For himself he took no delight in haunting the woods, till their golden plumage (the yellow leaves) were beginning to fall, and leave the brown-black limbs bare, like Nature in her skeleton dress."

Then stood up one of those gentle fairies that are good to man, and blushed red as any rose while he told a modest story of one of his own good deeds.

"It chanced upon a time," he said, "that while we were looking for cowslips in the meads, while yet the dew was hanging on the buds like beads, we found a babe left in its swathing-clothes—a little sorrowful, deserted thing.

"It was pity to see the abandoned little orphan left to the world's care by an unnatural mother. How the cold dew kept wetting its childish coats; and its little hair, how it was bedabbled, that was like gossamer! Its pouting mouth, unknowing how to speak, lay half-opened like a rose-lipped shell; and its cheek was softer than any peach, upon which the tears, for very roundness, could not long dwell, but fell off, in clearness like pearls—some on the grass, and some on his little hand; and some haply wandered to the little dimpled well under his mouth, which Love himself

seemed to have planned out, but less for tears than for smilings.

"Pity, it was, too, to see how the burning sun had scorched its helpless limbs; for it lay without shade or shelter, or mother's breast, for foul weather or fair. So, having compassion on its sad plight, my fellows and I turned ourselves into grasshoppers, and swarmed about the babe, making such shrill cries as that pretty little chirping creature makes in its mirth, till with our noise we attracted the attention of a passing rustic, a tender-hearted hind, who, wondering at our small but loud concert, strayed aside curiously, and found the babe, where it lay in the remote grass, and taking it up, lapped it in his russet coat, and bore it to his cottage, where his wife kindly nurtured it till it grew up a goodly personage.

"How this babe prospered afterwards, let proud London tell. This was that famous Sir Thomas Gresham, who was the chiefest of her merchants, the richest, the wisest. Witness his many goodly vessels on the Thames, freighted with costly merchandise, jewels from Ind, and pearls for courtly dames, and silks of Samarcand. And witness, more than all, that stately Bourse (or Exchange) which he caused to be built, a mart for merchants from east and west, whose graceful summit still bears, in token of the fairies' favours, his chosen crest, the grasshopper. And, like the grasshopper, may it please you, great king, to suffer us also to live, partakers of the green earth!"

The fairy had scarce ended his plea, when a shrill cry, not unlike the grasshopper's, was heard. Poor Puck—or Robin Goodfellow, as he is sometimes called—had recovered a little from his first fright, and, in one of his mad freaks, had perched upon the beard of old Time, which was flowing, ample, and majestic; and was amusing himself with plucking at a hair, which was indeed so massy that it seemed to him that he was removing some huge beam of timber,

rather than a hair: which Time, by some ill chance perceiving, snatched up the impish mischief with his great hand, and asked what it was.

“Alas!” quoth Puck, “a little random elf am I, born in one of Nature’s sports; a very weed, created for the simple, sweet enjoyment of myself, but for no other purpose, worth, or need, that ever I could learn. ‘Tis I that bob the angler’s idle cork, till the patient man is ready to breathe a curse. I steal the morsel from the gossip’s fork, or stop the sneezing chanter in mid psalm; and when an infant has been born with hard or homely features, mothers say I changed the child at nurse: but to fulfil any graver purpose I have not wit enough, and hardly the will. I am a pinch of lively dust to frisk upon the wind: a tear would make a puddle of me; and so I tickle myself with the lightest straw, and shun all griefs that might make me stagnant. This is my small philosophy.”

Then Time, dropping him on the ground, as a thing too inconsiderable for his vengeance, grasped fast his mighty scythe: and now, not Puck alone, but the whole state of fairies, had gone to inevitable wreck and destruction, had not a timely apparition interposed, at whose boldness Time was astounded; for he came not with the habit of the forces of a deity, who alone might cope with Time, but as a simple mortal, clad as you might see a forester that hunts after wild conies by the cold moonshine; or a stalker of stray deer, stealthy and bold.

But by the golden lustre in his eye, and the passionate wanness in his cheek, and by the fair and ample space of his forehead, which seemed a palace framed for the habitation of all glorious thoughts, he knew that this was his great rival, who had power given him to rescue whatsoever victims Time should clutch, and to cause them to live for ever in his immortal verse.

And, muttering the name of SHAKESPEARE, Time

spread his roc-like wings, and fled the controlling presence ; and the liberated court of the fairies, with Titania at their head, flocked around the gentle ghost, giving him thanks, nodding to him, and doing him courtesies, who had crowned them henceforth with a permanent existence, to live in the minds of men, while verse shall have power to charm, or midsummer moons shall brighten.

CHARLES LAMB.

An Answered Prayer

“ PARDON, a thousand times,” said the Notary, shrugging his shoulders apologetically, “ and still a thousand times more, but I can give you no further information. I know that I said there were nine schools in my district, and I know also that I do *not* know the name of the ninth school nor where it is. Before the war Hungarian officials sat in this accursed office (again I ask pardon of your Excellence !), and for four years there have been no mountain schools open, only this one here in the main village. And I—well, I have not yet been here a year, and I have not interested myself in the schools until quite lately—since, in fact, the coming of the English ladies.”

“ But does no one in the whole village know of this school ? ” I asked. “ And the schoolmaster, this man who has been to this office three times to ask for help for his pupils, what sort of a man is he ? ”

“ Most gracious, it is namely so. This school is not a school-house ; the children just meet in any peasant’s cottage that is by chance empty. And for the man—Jesu Maria ! he is one of those poor, witless creatures, an invalid from the war, with one lung, and that a weak one. He is not a certificated teacher, and, fool that he is, he has left no name, nor number of his house, nor of that where the school assembles, nor name of the valley or mountain where

the school may be ! But, dear lady, if you will wait but till Sunday"—it was then Tuesday—"he will come in on his way from church perhaps."

"Perhaps," I said with scorn. "Is not this the third time I have been to this office to ask for information about the school ? And how many times the teacher has left messages, who knows ? Now, I am indeed angry ! Yes, I, an Englishwoman, am no longer cold, as you say all English people are, but *hot* with anger ! You say the school must be in the direction of Klin ; very well, I will go up that valley and I will find the school myself."

"Then for a certainty you will be lost !" wailed the Notary. "See, already the snow falls ; it will soon be a metre deep, and all the paths will be hidden—for the school is not on any road. Also, horses harnessed to a wagon cannot climb mountains, and you should not go alone. I beg of you not to go, for if you do, of a surety there will be a dreadful accident, and I, as Notary, will be blamed. Besides, if *I*, the Notary, don't know the whereabouts of this school, *who* will know ? Na ! "

"I shall go through Predmier, and then I shall ask every one I meet on the road. You see, if I don't go to-day, neither I nor the other ladies can go for a fortnight, and it is time that these children were fed. So good-bye, Mr. Notary," I said.

The Notary, very perturbed, sprang across the passage to the Doctor's surgery, and he too came out to the wagon and said that there was no school, and probably the fool teacher just wanted the stores for himself. Why did I not come on to his house in this vile weather and sit by the fire with his wife and talk over the scandal of the village ? And later, when the patients had all gone, he would come and tell me how slack was the Notary, and the Notary should tell me how many patients he had killed during the last months. Na !

I thanked them and set off, leaving two very disconsolate and anxious men behind.

Then I told Florian, my soldier driver, what we were up against, and he entered into the spirit of the thing at once, crying: "To be sure, to be sure, dear little lady! To hunt a school, as you say, is almost as good as to hunt a wild boar, but first we must find a spoor, yes?"

We passed through Predmier and made many inquiries. Long strings of woodmen, their horses hauling huge pine trees along the valley road, passed us, but no one knew of the ninth school. At last we met a young man who recognized the description of the schoolmaster.

"Aie," he said, "he lives at Ribari—but that is far enough away—a white-faced man with lung disease! Please cross the high bridge, a kilometre on, and then climb to the top of the mountain on the other side of the river. Far down, and to the left, the gracious one will see a little nest of cottages, and there she will inquire, for the teacher lives beyond on the farther ridge. But they are wild people there, and the dear lady should not go alone."

We gladdened his soul with a few "Woodbines" and went on, Florian now very gloomy and begging me not to go alone, as he was afraid of the wild people and felt responsible for me.

The snow was now deep, and it was a long struggle to the "nest of cottages," where I found a guide. But the people were not "wild," only amused to find a woman in riding coat and breeches, and concerned that I should be out in the snowstorm. They shook off the thick snow from my coat and balaclava and rubbed my hands warm before they let the man take me up the hill-side. Before long he stopped suddenly, pointed to a door, then opened it quickly, saying, "Lo, the school! I take my leave!" pushed me gently inside, and departed.

It was just a one-roomed peasant's house, and I was barely over the threshold when there was a swift pattering of feet from the benches, and then, like the clustering of moths or butterflies, came the kisses of the children, on my hands, arms, the skirts of my coats, my knees, and even my boots.

For a moment they stayed so, silently kissing and patting me, while the teacher, his pale face streaming with tears, knelt and prayed to the crucifix on the wall above the table where he had been teaching. Not a word was spoken, and then back to their benches went the children, and they too knelt down and prayed.

I was overcome with amazement, for the usual form of greeting was very different. You entered the room; the children sprang immediately to their feet, but remained in their desks, while they recited in unison and at the top of their voices: "Pochvalen Pan Jesus Christus!"—i.e., "Praised be the Lord Jesus Christ," and you replied: "Na vieky, Amen!"—i.e., "For ever, Amen!" They never ran to welcome a stranger like that; it was not the custom, and I did not understand their silent prayer, nor the awe with which the teacher approached me to kiss my hand.

They were indeed a pitiful little assembly. In spite of the bitter weather, more than half of this school of forty-two children were bare-footed, several of the boys wearing one garment only, a shirt of coarse, homespun linen. The teacher, pinched and blue with cold and ill-health, at length recovered himself enough to explain the strange conduct of himself and his pupils.

He told me that he had been five times to the Notary's office, but had always been sent away by his servants, who promised to give his message to the Notary. In all the other schools every day the children had hot soup or cocoa, and they, the poorest, had nothing. For many days he had prayed night

and morning that an English lady would come, and had almost despaired. Then this morning he had told the children, on opening school, that to the other prayers they should add one, asking the Little Jesus who loves all children, to put it into the heart of the English ladies to come to their help. Having prayed, the children had believed, but had hardly thought that their prayer would be answered so quickly, and indeed had given up all hope for that day, as it was after three o'clock when I appeared, and they were just about to close school.

He begged me to pardon their disorderly conduct, and explained that they were very well-behaved as a rule.

I told him I quite understood, and we all stood round the stove while the teacher and I discussed the best means of bringing the food up the mountain, as there was no cart road.

I mentally cancelled another engagement, and told the teacher I would bring the food to the bridge in two days' time at midday.

The school refused to say "Good-bye," and, in spite of the blinding storm, insisted on taking me to the top of the second mountain, and then, when they saw, far down below, Florian and the wagon, they shouted and leapt for joy.

Two days later the teacher, the whole school, and about ten women from their hamlet met me at the bridge. The women wrapped the heavier sacks in sheets and carried them off at once, and the girls prepared to take up the smaller sacks and boxes in the same way, the boys doing nothing. I remarked on this to Florian, who agreed that the boys were much stronger, but explained that it was the custom for women and girls to carry in Slovakia—males only did it if there were no females at hand. He then translated for me, with the result that the boys decided at once that the heart of a "heaven-sent" lady

should not be heavy on their account, and taking the burdens from the girls, the food went up to Ribari in a long procession, which found breath, when it stopped at intervals, to sing a hymn of praise!

Now Florian was a Czech, and looked upon the Slovaks as a bigoted, priest-ridden race, and as he was packing the rugs round me he laughed. "Do you know what they said, Panicka?" he asked. "The miracle fulfilled! Yes, in the days to come this will be talked of as a miracle, and you, dear Mistress, will doubtless become a saint, because you came as *an answer to prayer!* And God knows," continued Florian whimsically, "we all tried hard enough to stop you!"

FRANCES MARSTON.

The Sexton and the Goblins

PROLOGUE

"How it snows!" said one of the men, in a low tone.

"Snows, does it?" said Wardle.

"Rough, cold night, sir," replied the man; "and there's a wind got up that drifts it across the fields in a thick white cloud."

"What does Jem say?" inquired the old lady. "There ain't anything the matter, is there?"

"No, no, mother," replied Wardle; "he says there's a snowdrift, and a wind that's piercing cold. I should know that, by the way it rumbles in the chimney."

"Ah!" said the old lady, "there was just such a wind and just such a fall of snow a good many years back, I recollect—just five years before your poor father died. It was a Christmas Eve, too; and I remember that on that very night he told us the story about the goblins that carried away old Gabriel Grub."

"The story about what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," replied Wardle. "About an

old sexton that the good people down here supposed to have been carried away by goblins."

"Suppose!" ejaculated the old lady. "Is there anybody hardy enough to disbelieve it? Suppose! Haven't you heard, ever since you were a child, that he was carried away by the goblins, and don't you know he was?"

"Very well, mother, he was, if you like," said Wardle, laughing.—"He was carried away by goblins, Pickwick; and there's an end of the matter."

"No, no," said Mr. Pickwick, "not an end of it, I assure you; for I must hear how, and why, and all about it."

Wardle smiled, as every head was bent forward to hear; and filling out the wassail with no stinted hand, nodded a health to Mr. Pickwick, and began as follows:

I

In an old abbey town, down in this part of the country, a long, long while ago—so long that the story must be a true one, because our great-grandfathers implicitly believed it—there officiated as sexton and grave-digger in the churchyard one Gabriel Grub. It by no means follows that because a man is a sexton, and constantly surrounded by emblems of mortality, therefore he should be a morose and melancholy man; your undertakers are the merriest fellows in the world; and I once had the honour of being on intimate terms with a mute, who, in private life and off duty, was as comical and jocose a little fellow as ever chirped out a devil-may-care song without a hitch in his memory.

But notwithstanding these precedents to the contrary, Gabriel Grub was an ill-conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow—a morose and lonely man, who consorted with nobody but himself and an old wicker bottle which fitted into his large deep waistcoat pocket, and who eyed each merry face, as it passed

him by, with such a deep scowl of malice and ill-humour as it was difficult to meet without feeling something the worse for.

A little before twilight, one Christmas Eve, Gabriel shouldered his spade, lighted his lantern, and betook himself towards the old churchyard ; for he had got a grave to finish by next morning, and feeling very low, he thought it might raise his spirits, perhaps, if he went on with his work at once. As he went his way up the ancient street, he saw the cheerful light of the blazing fires gleam through the old casements, and heard the loud laugh and the cheerful shouts of those who were assembled around them ; he marked the bustling preparations for next day's cheer, and smelt the numerous savoury odours consequent thereupon, as they steamed up from the kitchen windows in clouds. All this was gall and wormwood to the heart of Gabriel Grub ; and when groups of children bounded out of the houses, tripped across the road, and were met, before they could knock at the opposite door, by half a dozen curly-headed little rascals who crowded round them as they flocked upstairs to spend the evening in their Christmas games, Gabriel smiled grimly, and clutched the handle of his spade with a firmer grasp as he thought of measles, scarlet-fever, thrush, hooping-cough, and a good many other sources of consolation besides.

In this happy frame of mind Gabriel strode along, returning a short, sullen growl to the good-humoured greetings of such of his neighbours as now and then passed him, until he turned into the dark lane which led to the churchyard. Now Gabriel had been looking forward to reaching the dark lane, because it was, generally speaking, a nice, gloomy, mournful place, into which the townspeople did not much care to go, except in broad daylight, and when the sun was shining ; consequently, he was not a little indignant to hear a young urchin roaring out some jolly song

about a merry Christmas in this very sanctuary, which had been called Coffin Lane ever since the days of the old abbey and the time of the shaven-headed monks.

As Gabriel walked on and the voice drew nearer, he found it proceeded from a small boy, who was hurrying along to join one of the little parties in the old street, and who, partly to keep himself company, and partly to prepare himself for the occasion, was shouting out the song at the highest pitch of his lungs. So Gabriel waited until the boy came up, and then dodged him into a corner, and rapped him over the head with his lantern five or six times, to teach him to modulate his voice. And as the boy hurried away with his hand to his head, singing quite a different sort of tune, Gabriel Grub chuckled very heartily to himself, and entered the churchyard, locking the gate behind him.

He took off his coat, put down his lantern, and getting into the unfinished grave, worked at it for an hour or so with right good will. But the earth was hardened with the frost, and it was no very easy matter to break it up and shovel it out ; and although there was a moon, it was a very young one, and shed little light upon the grave, which was in the shadow of the church. At any other time these obstacles would have made Gabriel Grub very moody and miserable, but he was so well pleased with having stopped the small boy's singing, that he took little heed of the scanty progress he had made, and looked down into the grave, when he had finished work for the night, with grim satisfaction, murmuring as he gathered up his things :

“ Brave lodgings for one, brave lodgings for one,
A few feet of cold earth when life is done ;
A stone at the head, a stone at the feet,
A rich, juicy meal for the worms to eat ;
Rank grass overhead, and damp clay around,
Brave lodgings for one, these, in holy ground ! ”

“Ho! ho!” laughed Gabriel Grub, as he sat himself down on a flat tombstone which was a favourite resting-place of his, and drew forth his wicker bottle. “A coffin at Christmas! A Christmas box. Ho! ho! ho!”

“Ho! ho! ho!” repeated a voice which sounded close behind him.

II

Gabriel paused, in some alarm, in the act of raising the wicker bottle to his lips, and looked round. The bottom of the oldest grave about him was not more still and quiet than the churchyard in the pale moonlight. The cold hoar-frost glistened on the tombstones, and sparkled like rows of gems among the stone carvings of the old church. The snow lay hard and crisp upon the ground, and spread over the thickly-strewn mounds of earth so white and smooth a cover that it seemed as if corpses lay there, hidden only by their winding sheets. Not the faintest rustle broke the profound tranquillity of the solemn scene. Sound itself appeared to be frozen up, all was so cold and still.

“It was the echoes,” said Gabriel Grub, raising the bottle to his lips again.

“It was *not*,” said a deep voice.

Gabriel started up, and stood rooted to the spot with astonishment and terror; for his eyes rested on a form that made his blood run cold.

Seated on an upright tombstone close to him was a strange unearthly figure, who Gabriel felt at once was no being of this world. His long fantastic legs, which might have reached the ground, were cocked up and crossed after a quaint, fantastic fashion; his sinewy arms were bare; and his hands rested on his knees. On his short round body he wore a close covering, ornamented with small slashes; a short cloak dangled from his back; the collar was cut into curious peaks,

which served the goblin in lieu of ruff or neckerchief ; and his shoes curled up at the toes into long points. On his head he wore a broad-brimmed sugar-loaf hat, garnished with a single feather. The hat was covered with the white frost ; and the goblin looked as if he had sat on the same tombstone very comfortably for two or three hundred years. He was sitting perfectly still ; his tongue was put out, as if in derision ; and he was grinning at Gabriel Grub with such a grin as only a goblin could call up.

"It was *not* the echoes," said the goblin.

Gabriel Grub was paralysed, and could make no reply.

"What do you do here on Christmas Eve ?" said the goblin, sternly.

"I came to dig a grave, sir," stammered Gabriel Grub.

"What man wanders among graves and churchyards on such a night as this ?" cried the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub ! Gabriel Grub !" screamed a wild chorus of voices that seemed to fill the churchyard. Gabriel looked fearfully round ; nothing was to be seen.

"What have you got in that bottle ?" said the goblin.

"Hollands, sir," replied the sexton, trembling more than ever ; for he had bought it of the smugglers, and he thought that perhaps his questioner might be in the excise department of the goblins.

"Who drinks hollands alone, and in a churchyard, on such a night as this ?" said the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub ! Gabriel Grub !" exclaimed the wild voices again.

The goblin leered maliciously at the terrified sexton, and then raising his voice, exclaimed—

"And who, then, is our fair and lawful prize ?"

To this inquiry the invisible chorus replied, in a strain that sounded like the voices of many choristers

singing to the mighty swell of the old church organ—a strain that seemed borne to the sexton's ears upon a wild wind, and to die away as it passed onward; but the burden of the reply was still the same, "Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!"

The goblin grinned a broader grin than before, as he said, "Well, Gabriel, what do you say to this?"

The sexton gasped for breath.

"What do you think of this, Gabriel?" said the goblin, kicking up his feet in the air on either side of the tombstone, and looking at the turned-up points with as much complacency as if he had been contemplating the most fashionable pair of Wellingtons in all Bond Street.

"It's—it's—very curious, sir," replied the sexton, half dead with fright—"very curious, and very pretty; but I think I'll go back and finish my work, sir, if you please."

"Work!" said the goblin; "what work?"

"The grave, sir—making the grave," stammered the sexton.

"Oh, the grave, eh?" said the goblin; "who makes graves at a time when all other men are merry, and takes a pleasure in it?"

Again the mysterious voices replied, "Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!"

"I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel," said the goblin, thrusting his tongue further into his cheek than ever—and a most astonishing tongue it was—

"I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel," said the goblin.

"Under favour, sir," replied the horror-stricken sexton, "I don't think they can, sir; they don't know me, sir—I don't think the gentlemen have ever seen me, sir."

"Oh yes, they have," replied the goblin; "we know the man with the sulky face and the grim scowl, that came down the street to-night, throwing his evil

looks at the children, and grasping his burying-spade the tighter. We know the man who struck the boy in the envious malice of his heart, because the boy could be merry and he could not. We know him, we know him."

Here the goblin gave a loud, shrill laugh, which the echoes returned twentyfold ; and throwing his legs up in the air, stood upon his head, or rather upon the very point of his sugar-loaf hat, on the narrow edge of the tombstone, whence he threw a summerset with extraordinary agility, right to the sexton's feet, at which he planted himself in the attitude in which tailors generally sit upon the shop-board.

"I—I—am afraid I must leave you, sir," said the sexton, making an effort to move.

"Leave us!" said the goblin ; "Gabriel Grub going to leave us. Ho! ho! ho!"

As the goblin laughed, the sexton observed for one instant a brilliant illumination within the windows of the church, as if the whole building were lighted up ; it disappeared, the organ pealed forth a lively air, and whole troops of goblins, the very counterpart of the first one, poured into the churchyard, and began playing at leap-frog with the tombstones, never stopping for an instant to take breath, but "overing" the highest among them, one after the other, with the most marvellous dexterity. The first goblin was a most astonishing leaper, and none of the others could come near him ; even in the extremity of his terror the sexton could not help observing, that while his friends were content to leap over the common-sized gravestones, the first one took the family vaults, iron railings and all, with as much ease as if they had been so many street posts.

At last the game reached to a most exciting pitch ; the organ played quicker and quicker, and the goblins leaped faster and faster, coiling themselves up, rolling head over heels upon the ground, and bounding over

the tombstones like footballs. The sexton's brain whirled round with the rapidity of the motion he beheld, and his legs reeled beneath him as the spirits flew before his eyes ; when the goblin king, suddenly darting towards him, laid his hand upon his collar, and sank with him through the earth.

When Gabriel Grub had had time to fetch his breath, which the rapidity of his descent had for the moment taken away, he found himself in what appeared to be a large cavern, surrounded on all sides by crowds of goblins, ugly and grim ; in the centre of the room, on an elevated seat, was stationed his friend of the churchyard, and close beside him stood Gabriel Grub himself, without the power of motion.

"Cold to-night," said the king of the goblins, "very cold. A glass of something warm, here ! "

At this command half a dozen officious goblins, with a perpetual smile upon their faces, whom Gabriel Grub imagined to be courtiers on that account, hastily disappeared, and presently returned with a goblet of liquid fire, which they presented to the king.

"Ah ! " cried the goblin, whose cheeks and throat were transparent as he tossed down the flame, "this warms one, indeed ! Bring a bumper of the same for Mr. Grub."

It was in vain for the unfortunate sexton to protest that he was not in the habit of taking anything warm at night. One of the goblins held him while another poured the blazing liquid down his throat ; the whole assembly screeched with laughter as he coughed and choked, and wiped away the tears which gushed plentifully from his eyes, after swallowing the burning draught.

"And now," said the king, fantastically poking the taper corner of his sugar-loaf hat into the sexton's eye, and thereby occasioning him the most exquisite pain—"and now show the man of misery and gloom a few of the pictures from our own great storehouse."

As the goblin said this, a thick cloud, which obscured the remoter end of the cavern, rolled gradually away, and disclosed, apparently at a great distance, a small and scantily-furnished but neat and clean apartment. A crowd of little children were gathered round a bright fire, clinging to their mother's gown, and gambolling around her chair. The mother occasionally rose, and drew aside the window-curtain, as if to look for some expected object ; a frugal meal was ready spread upon the table, and an elbow chair was placed near the fire. A knock was heard at the door ; the mother opened it, and the children crowded round her, and clapped their hands for joy as their father entered. He was wet and weary, and shook the snow from his garments as the children crowded round him, and seizing his cloak, hat, stick, and gloves, with busy zeal ran with them from the room. Then, as he sat down to his meal before the fire, the children climbed about his knee, and the mother sat by his side, and all seemed happiness and comfort.

But a change came upon the view, almost imperceptibly. The scene was altered to a small bedroom, where the fairest and youngest child lay dying ; the roses had fled from his cheek, and the light from his eye ; and even as the sexton looked upon him with an interest he had never felt or known before, he died. His young brothers and sisters crowded round his little bed, and seized his tiny hand, so cold and heavy ; but they shrank back from his touch, and looked with awe on his infant face : for calm and tranquil as it was, and sleeping in rest and peace as the beautiful child seemed to be, they saw that he was dead, and they knew that he was an angel, looking down upon and blessing them from a bright and happy heaven.

Again the light cloud passed across the picture, and again the subject changed. The father and mother were old and helpless now, and the number of those about them was diminished more than half ; but

content and cheerfulness sat on every face, and beamed in every eye, as they crowded round the fireside, and told and listened to old stories of earlier and bygone days. Slowly and peacefully the father sank into the grave, and soon after the sharer of all his cares and troubles followed him to a place of rest. The few who yet survived them knelt by their tomb, and watered the green turf which covered it with their tears ; then rose, and turned away, sadly and mournfully, but not with bitter cries or despairing lamentations, for they knew that they should one day meet again ; and once more they mixed with the busy world, and their content and cheerfulness were restored. The cloud settled upon the picture, and concealed it from the sexton's view.

"What do you think of *that*?" said the goblin, turning his large face towards Gabriel Grub.

Gabriel murmured out something about its being very pretty, and looked somewhat ashamed as the goblin bent his fiery eyes upon him.

"*You miserable man!*" said the goblin, in a tone of excessive contempt—"you!" He appeared disposed to add more, but indignation choked his utterance ; so he lifted up one of his very pliable legs, and flourishing it above his head a little to ensure his aim, administered a good sound kick to Gabriel Grub, immediately after which all the goblins in waiting crowded round the wretched sexton, and kicked him without mercy, according to the established and invariable custom of courtiers upon earth, who kick whom royalty kicks, and hug whom royalty hugs.

"Show him some more!" said the king of the goblins.

At these words the cloud was again dispelled, and a rich and beautiful landscape was disclosed to view—there is just such another to this day, within half a mile of the old abbey town. The sun shone from out the clear, blue sky, the water sparkled beneath his

rays, and the trees looked greener, and the flowers more gay, beneath his cheering influence. The water rippled on with a pleasant sound ; the trees rustled in the light wind that murmured among their leaves ; the birds sang upon the boughs, and the lark carolled on high her welcome to the morning. Yes, it was morning—the bright, balmy morning of summer ; the minutest leaf, the smallest blade of grass was instinct with life. The ant crept forth to her daily toil, the butterfly fluttered and basked in the warm rays of the sun ; myriads of insects spread their transparent wings, and revelled in their brief but happy existence. Man walked forth, elated with the scene, and all was brightness and splendour.

“ *You* miserable man ! ” said the king of the goblins, in a more contemptuous tone than before. And again the king of the goblins gave his leg a flourish ; again it descended on the shoulders of the sexton ; and again the attendant goblins imitated the example of their chief.

Many a time the cloud went and came, and many a lesson it taught to Gabriel Grub, who, although his shoulders smarted with pain from the frequent applications of the goblins’ feet, looked on with an interest that nothing could diminish. He saw that men who worked hard, and earned their scanty bread with lives of labour, were cheerful and happy ; and that to the most ignorant the sweet face of nature was a never-failing source of cheerfulness and joy. He saw those who had been delicately nurtured and tenderly brought up cheerful under privations, and superior to suffering that would have crushed many of a rougher grain, because they bore within their own bosoms the materials of happiness, contentment, and peace. He saw that women, the tenderest and most fragile of all God’s creatures, were the oftenest superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress ; and he saw that it was because they bore in their own hearts an inexhaustible

well-spring of affection and devotion. Above all, he saw that men like himself, who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds on the fair surface of the earth ; and setting all the good of the world against the evil, he came to the conclusion that it was a very decent and respectable sort of world after all. No sooner had he formed it than the cloud which had closed over the last picture seemed to settle on his senses and lull him to repose. One by one the goblins faded from his sight, and as the last one disappeared he sunk to sleep.

The day had broken when Gabriel Grub awoke and found himself lying at full length on the flat gravestone in the churchyard, with the wicker bottle lying empty by his side, and his coat, spade, and lantern, all well whitened by the last night's frost, scattered on the ground. The stone on which he had first seen the goblin seated stood bolt upright before him, and the grave at which he had worked the night before, were not far off. At first he began to doubt the reality of his adventures, but the acute pain in his shoulders when he attempted to rise assured him that the kicking of the goblins was certainly not part of a dream. He was staggered again by observing no traces of footsteps in the snow on which the goblins had played at leap-frog with the gravestones, but he speedily accounted for this circumstance when he remembered that being spirits they would leave no visible impression behind them. So Gabriel Grub got on his feet as well as he could for the pain in his back ; and brushing the frost off his coat, put it on, and turned his face towards the town.

But he was an altered man, and he could not bear the thought of returning to a place where his repentance would be scoffed at and his reformation disbelieved. He hesitated for a few moments, and then turned away to wander where he might, and seek his bread elsewhere.

The lantern, the spade, and the wicker bottle were

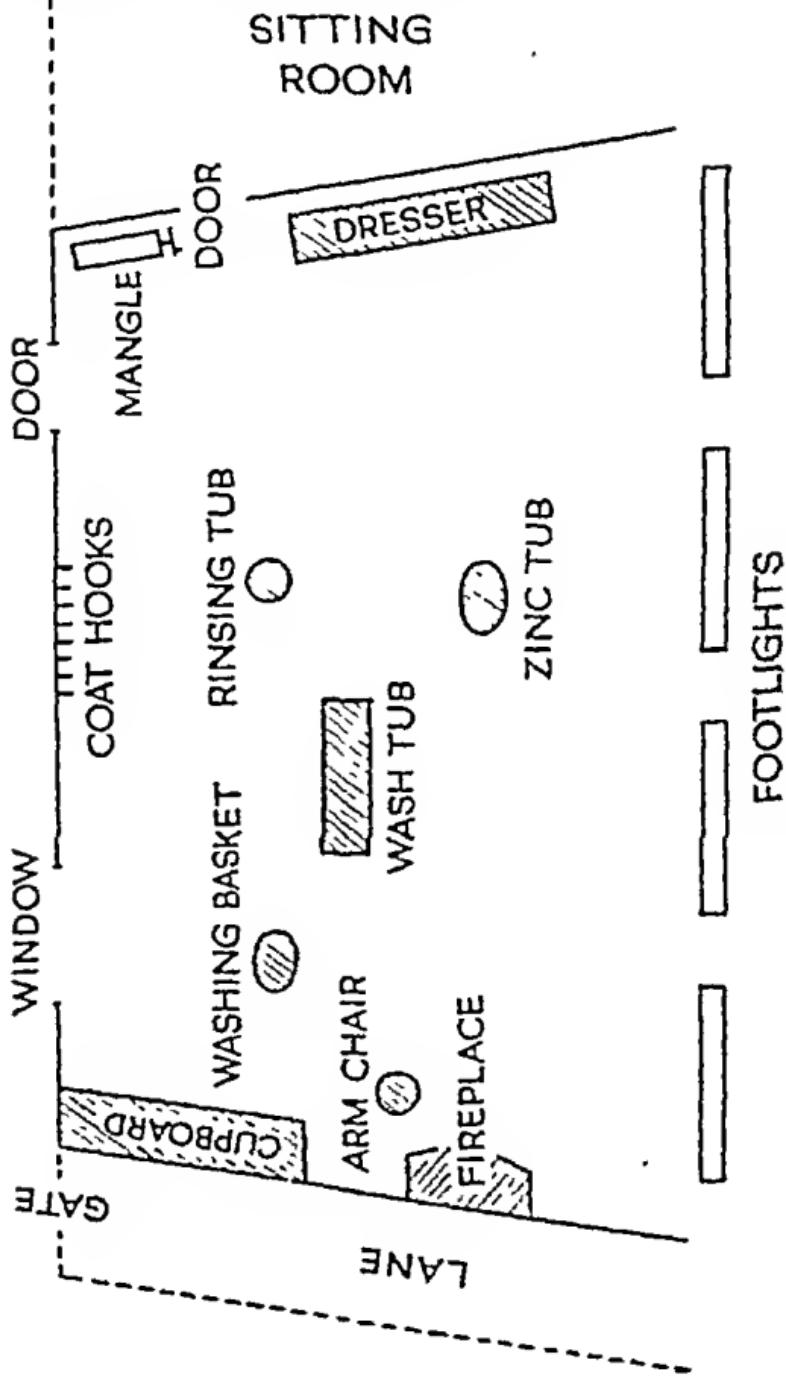
found that day in the churchyard. There were a great many speculations about the sexton's fate at first, but it was speedily determined that he had been carried away by the goblins; and there were not wanting some very credible witnesses who had distinctly seen him whisked through the air on the back of a chestnut horse, blind of one eye, with the hind quarters of a lion and the tail of a bear. At length all this was devoutly believed, and the new sexton used to exhibit to the curious, for a trifling emolument, a good-sized piece of the church weathercock which had been accidentally kicked off by the aforesaid horse in his aerial flight, and picked up by himself in the churchyard a year or two afterwards.

Unfortunately these stories were somewhat disturbed by the unlooked-for reappearance of Gabriel Grub himself, some ten years afterwards, a ragged, contented, rheumatic old man.

He told his story to the clergyman, and also to the mayor; and in course of time it began to be received as a matter of history, in which form it has continued down to this very day. The believers in the weathercock tale, having misplaced their confidence once, were not easily prevailed upon to part with it again, so they looked as wise as they could, shrugged their shoulders, touched their foreheads, and murmured something about Gabriel Grub having drunk all the hollands and then fallen asleep on the flat tombstone; and they affected to explain what he supposed he had witnessed in the goblins' cavern by saying that he had seen the world and grown wiser. But this opinion, which was by no means a popular one at any time, gradually died off; and be the matter how it may, as Gabriel Grub was afflicted with rheumatism to the end of his days, this story has at least one moral, if it teach no better one—and that is, that if a man turn sulky and drink by himself at Christmas time, he may make up his mind to be not a bit the better for it, let the

THE HORDLE POACHER

HIGH BANK OF THE FIFTY FOOT DRAIN



spirits be never so good, or let them be even as many degrees beyond proof as those which Gabriel Grub saw in the goblins' cavern.

CHARLES DICKENS: *The Pickwick Papers*

The Hordle Poacher

Extract from County Directory

HOLT-IN-THE-MARSH is a village of 456 inhabitants. Marsh House, the seat of Lord Marshfellowton, who owns much of the parish, is occupied by his Agent, Evelyn Wimsey, Esquire. Titus Ambrose, Esquire, is a large landowner here. The two great Fen waterways, the Old Cut Drain, and the Fifty Foot Drain, meet at Holt Sluice. Holt Marsh, a stretch of grazing land flooded in winter, is drained by Holt Creek, a partly natural, partly artificial watercourse, which discharges into the sea through the old Roman Bank at Fleet St Andrew's Sluicegate. There is a foal fair here in September. Church—Holy Trinity. Rector—Rev. A. Moxey. Wesleyan Chapel. Bottle and Glass Inn (Gregory Ingamells) Carpenter's Arms Inn (J. Frost). Black Horse Inn (L. Ford).

[The curtain rises early one November morning on the kitchen of a gamekeeper's cottage which stands at the end of a lane off the main road from Fletton to Holt-in-the-Marsh. The kitchen is a large one, with a brick floor and whitewashed walls. In the centre of the right wall is a door into the sitting-room. On the left of this door is a mangle, and on its right a dresser. The fireplace and a large cupboard occupy the left wall. The back wall has a door on the right and a window on the left commanding the garden, at the end of which is seen the very high bank of the Fifty Foot Drain, which takes its name from its

width and runs as straight as if it had been drawn with a ruler from Winch Brook to the Great Sluice at Tanvats.

Ellen Hudson, the keeper's wife, standing behind a wash-tub in the centre of the floor, with her sleeves rolled up, is a big woman, thirty-one years of age, bursting with health. She has straight black hair, combed off her forehead and knotted at the back, bright brown eyes, and rosy cheeks of a hard plumpness that only long outdoor life can give. She is wearing a rather faded print frock, and an apron of coarse brown sacking. Behind her are a basket of already washed articles and a rinsing tub on a stool. Between her and the dresser stands a small zinc bath heaped up with clothes awaiting their turn, on the top of which lies a soiled print gown. An armchair is drawn up to the fire.

A man is seen passing the window.

The door opens, and Tom Hudson enters with a gun under his arm. He threads his way across the kitchen to the fireplace, nearly knocking the washing basket over, and puts his gun against the wall beside the cupboard.]

Ellen. Hey ! Mind where you're stepping ! [Tom sits down by the fireside without speaking. He is between thirty-five and forty years of age, of middle height, broad-shouldered and muscular, and is wearing an old velveteen jacket, a dark-red knitted waistcoat, cloth breeches, leather leggings, stout shooting boots, and a flat tweed cap.] What's up ? Don't sit there like a frog with one leg. I didn't mind so much last night, 'coz I thought you was done up, but I'm too busy to do with it this morning.

Tom. It's Mester Wincey.

Ellen. What's wrong with him ?

Tom. He sent for me yesterday afternoon up to Marsh House to say as he wasn't very well satisfied.

Ellen [wringing out the article she is washing, and throwing it into the basket]. Oh, isn't he.

Tom. I felt like telling him to get suited with somebody else.

Ellen [starting on a tablecloth]. We can't afford to move about the country every week. What's he want to grumble about, anyway ?

Tom. The same old tale—poaching.

Ellen. Why doesn't he give you more help, then ?

Tom. That's what I say ; but he goes on about the reputation as I brought from Cowsley, and the great wage he's giving me for his lordship.

Ellen. Great wage ? [Turning to him] What great wage ?

Tom [hanging up his cap on a peg]. That's what he calls it.

Ellen [resuming her washing]. Huh ! Twenty-three shillings and a cottage, without so much as an out-house to do a bit of washing in ! The man as built this place never had no wife, I know.

Tom. He says he got me to come to Holt to put down the poaching—as if I didn't know that !

Ellen. Well, you've stopped most of it, haven't you ?

Tom. I could stop the lot if I had a bit more help. The place got so bad under the last man that anybody but *me* would have been flummuxed altogether ; yet the Agent reckons I'm going to get it all made right in about ten minutes.

Ellen. He must be a fool.

Tom [fiercely]. He talks as soft as a turnip.

Ellen. What's tittled him up just now ?

Tom. Why—night before last somebody got into yon spinney at the end of the lane—the one we're so careful over—and helped himself.

Ellen. Oh ! Where was you ?

Tom. T'other end of the Estate—up by Fletton Woods.

Ellen. Who was it ? Do you know ?

Tom. I've a good idea.

Ellen. Oh ! Who ?

Tom. A chap as is stopping at the Bottle and Glass ; a regular loafing fellow. Toby Morton says he's been boasting as how he could give any keeper a lesson, and should take what he wanted where he liked. [He fetches his gun, and starts to clean it with a rag from his pocket.]

Ellen. And can't you catch him ?

Tom. He's as full of craft as a wagon-load of monkeys with their tails burnt off. Keeper Jackson of Fletton told me all about him. I had young Walter Bealby watching the Bottle and Glass all yesterday, but he didn't stir an inch, and when night come, I went down myself.

Ellen. And what happened ?

Tom. I watched the front door, and Walter watched the back, but he must have got out without either of us seeing him.

Ellen. How did he manage that ?

Tom. That's more than I can tell you. The lad swore as he didn't go out by the back, and I know him to be a smart boy. Anyhow, he got out, and what's more, went to the same spinney again.

Ellen. He didn't !

Tom. He did. And what's more'n that, he must have been at work inside while I stood on the road listening, because when I found as he didn't come out after ten o'clock, I walked to the spinney and waited there for a nice time, but I never heard as much as a squeak ! I tell you, Nell, I'm about bottled.

Ellen [drying her hands on her apron, poking the fire, and putting the kettle on]. Well, well, have a bit of breakfast, and you'll feel ever so much better. You've been worrying out yonder on an empty stomach, and nothing's worse than that.

Tom. Yon chap's took my appetite away.

Ellen [crossing to the dresser and reaching down a cup, saucer, and plate]. Do you know who he is ?

Tom. Barley, they call him, and he comes from Hordle.

Ellen. A "Hordle Hound," is he ? Have your breakfast, anyway. I can get it ready in a minute.

Tom [rising and getting his gun]. No, not yet. I'll go and look at yon new eel trap first ; then, maybe, I shall feel more like it.

Ellen. You have to catch poachers with the game on them, don't you ?

Tom [sarcastically]. That's all !

Ellen [thoughtfully]. There must be some way of nailing him.

Tom [bursting out]. I've a good mind to go to the Bottle and Glass and crack his head for him.

Ellen. No, no ! You must catch him.

Tom. How ?

Ellen. By craft.

Tom. You mean put salt on his tail ?

Ellen. The folks in these Fens, Tom, is different to them as we've been used to in yon Wolds. They're a cunning lot, and the only way to match 'em is to be cunninger still.

Tom. That's all very well, but how can I deal with a score at once ? Everybody down here has either a dog or a gun, and most of 'em has both. All the Agent says is, "Come, Hudson, be sharp ; show 'em what you're made of," as if I were forty men all rolled into one. It's enough to sicken a cat.

Ellen. You go and look at your eel trap, and when you come back I'll get your breakfast. Oh yes—while you're out there, you might have a look at the end clothes post. It's wembling about till I can hardly hang the things up.

Tom. All right !

Ellen. And don't worry yourself any more. We shall catch this man before we've done.

Tom [in the doorway]. Ay ! I've no doubt we shall—leastways, you will. You'll be up to-night by yon spinney, and when he comes creeping up a dyke, you'll nab him single-handed, no doubt. And then the Agent 'll make you keeper in my place.

Ellen [calmly]. Maybe I could catch him, Tom Hudson, and maybe I couldn't ; but mark my words—there's more done in this world by using your wits than by losing your temper.

Tom [savagely]. Anybody 'ud think as you'd been one of Solomon's three hundred wives ! [He slams the door behind him.]

Ellen. Tchk ! Tchk ! I do believe some husbands think they've all the sense, and us women isn't fit for anything but washing clothes. [She scrubs vigorously.] I wish I'd been a man. I'd have learned some of 'em, that I would. They don't think a woman's work is anything at all, but I should like to see them setting themselves to it. [A man is seen passing the window, and there is a knock at the door.] Who's that ?

[The door opens gently to show Fred Barley. He is about the same age and height as Tom Hudson, but not nearly so well developed, so that he looks smaller. He is quick in his movements, and rather ferrety in appearance, having reddish hair and red brown eyes. His trousers (which appear to have been made of sailcloth) are hitched up by straps under the knees, his boots are very heavy and dirty, and a linen bag is slung over his shoulder.]

Fred. Good-morning, Missis ! I've lost my way somehow. Can you set me right again ?

Ellen [scrutinizing him closely]. How come you to lose your way ?

Fred [stepping into the kitchen and closing the door behind him]. This is the awkwardest country for a stranger as I ever did see. There's nothing but

marshes and rivers, and being neither a bird nor a fish, I'm stopped at every turn.

Ellen. You aren't a pedler, are you?

Fred [*putting his bag on the floor*]. I've been working on the big sluice at Tanyats, but I had a disagreement with the foreman, and left.

Ellen. Are you tramping the country, then?

Fred. I heard as a very big farmer this way was short of hands, and I'm off to him for a job.

Ellen. Who might that be?

Fred. Ambrose—Titus Ambrose of Holt.

Ellen. Oh, him! You're not far away—only a matter of a couple of miles, but how did you get down this lane?

Fred. Some great fool of a roadman told me to take the first turning to the right.

Ellen. He meant the *next* turning. This isn't a road, it doesn't lead anywhere. What sort of a place are you after?

Fred. I don't care a deal what it is: wagoner, groom, gardener, ploughman, potato picker, or foreman—I can turn my hand to anything.

Ellen. How is it you don't stop in one place, if you're so clever?

Fred. When my master's satisfied, I'm not; and when I'm satisfied he isn't; and so we soon part.

Ellen. Rolling stones gather no moss, young fellow.

Fred [*warming his hands at the fire*]. I don't want to gather no moss. I aren't a toadstool.

Ellen. You don't sound as if you wanted to find a deal of work, either. Where do you come from?

Fred. Hordle.

Ellen [*taking a surreptitious glance at his bag*]. Hordle! Oh!

Fred. What's the matter with Hordle?

Ellen. It's a rum place, isn't it?

Fred. It's a good place.

Ellen. Umm !

Fred. It is, for all your umming.

Ellen. Then what did you leave it for ?

Fred. For a change. Could you give me a drop of drink, Missis ? I'm as dry as a fish what's been caught three weeks.

Ellen. I'll give you a drink as you haven't tasted for many a long day. [She goes to the dresser and pours him out a glass of water.] There you are—Adam's grog !

Fred [taking a very small sip and giving her back the glass]. Thank you kindly, Missis ; and now I must be off. [He picks up his bag.]

Ellen. Don't you want any more ?

Fred. No, thanks. I'm hardly used to it, and it might go to my head. [He turns to the door.]

Ellen. Don't be in such a hurry. I'm glad of a bit of company. If you'll sit down for a few minutes, I'll see if there's a drop of my elderberry wine left.

Fred [sociably]. I don't mind if I do. [He returns to the fire, putting his bag under the chair, and making himself comfortable, whilst Ellen glances anxiously out of the window for signs of her husband as she goes to the cupboard. She fills a tumbler half-full of home-made wine, and gives it to Fred.]

Ellen. There you are. Try that !

Fred [smacking his lips]. That's a bit of all right, that is !

Ellen. What did you say your name was ?

Fred. Barley—Fred Barley.

Ellen [recommencing her washing]. Then let me warn you, Mr. Barley from Hordle, as you're not in No Man's Land now. The land round here all belongs to Lord Marshfellowton, and the game's strictly preserved.

Fred [amiably]. Well, what's that matter to you—your husband isn't the Lord, is he ?

Ellen. I was only warning you.

Fred. What I say is—game's game, and belongs to them as can get it. These lords has no right to preserve it at all.

Ellen. Folks can do what they like with their own, can't they?

Fred. The land ought to belong to them as lives on it.

Ellen [*taking a covert glance out of the window*]. You're a Radical, I can easy see.

Fred. No—Labour. We're going to split these great estates up, and then I shall have a little farm. I'm all for a bit of land, I am.

Ellen. Them that has small holdings works a deal harder than you've ever done, my man.

Fred [*ignoring this*]. As Bob Cutts says—game's wild, and should belong to them as can catch it.

Ellen. You'd better tell that to the keepers.

Fred. Keepers! I care naught for keepers.

Ellen. Don't you, now?

Fred. I don't. A lot of mucky, sneaking fellows, I calls 'em, as earns their keep by spying on their neighbours!

Ellen. Oh, that's it, is it?

Fred. We care for nobody at Hordle, neither lords nor earls. They tell me this Marshfellowton's as savage at preserving game as old Rupert Harbord was. Reckon they're above the law, don't they, these landowners! I'd as leave give one a broggle with a stick as look at him.

Ellen. You're a nice sort to come here for work.

Fred. Why? Isn't there anybody round here as does a bit of poaching?

Ellen. Plenty. But our Agent's got a brand new keeper to put a stop to it.

Fred. I heard all about this fine keeper last night.

Ellen. Oh, where were you?

Fred. Stopping at the Bottle and Glass—by the cross-roads.

Ellen [looking out of the window]. A low place!

Fred. That's as may be, but they've good ale. [He finishes his wine, and says politely]: Though it isn't up to this, of course. Anyway, I heard all about this keeper, and so I went to have a look at him.

Ellen. Did you see him?

Fred. No, I didn't, and what's more, he didn't see me.

Ellen. He would have done if you'd been up to any tricks.

Fred [sarcastically]. Would he now?

Ellen. He would, and quick!

Fred. Indeed!

Ellen. And if you try any of your games here, you'll be in jail before you can say "knife."

Fred. I'm glad to know that, Missis, because, being a stranger in these parts, and not knowing the ways about here, I might easy have got myself into trouble.

Ellen. You easy might!

Fred. 'Coz if any old keeper was to come nosing round, and happened to look in this here bag of mine [*he stoops down and opens its mouth to show the contents to Ellen*], they might get a wrong idea altogether, mightn't they?

Ellen [putting her hands on her hips]. Well!

Fred [closing the bag]. Anybody might fancy as there was a brace of birds in there, mightn't they?

Ellen [in pretended admiration]. You rascal!

Fred. If that brand new keeper was to see 'em, he wouldn't like it at all, would he?

Ellen. Where did you get 'em?

Fred. I found 'em on the road.

Ellen. That's all a bag of moonshine, that is.

Fred. P'raps it is, and p'raps it isn't; anyway, I found 'em.

Ellen. I don't believe a word of it. You're no poacher. You're not half sharp enough. Somebody's given 'em to you.

Fred [rising to the bait]. Oh, have they! Then let me tell you they came out of that spinney at the end of the lane.

Ellen. You must be an old hand. Have you ever been before the Bench at Bly?

Fred. What do you take me for? You might catch Soldier John asleep, but not a Hordle man napping. Well, I must be off! You said down this lane, and the first to the right, didn't you? Isn't there a nearer way?

Ellen. There's no way at all past this house, unless you swim the Fifty Foot, and that's full to the top of the bank.

Fred [picking up his bag and rising]. Well, thank ye kindly, Missis. Should you like a hare now [*he half opens the bag*] for your drop of drink and your good advice?

Ellen [sharply]. No—I don't want it.

Fred. She's as plump as butter, and would go well with a bit of fat bacon.

Ellen. You mustn't leave it here.

Fred [advancing on Ellen amorously]. Pop it into your pantry, and you can give me a kiss for it, if you like.

Ellen. A little less of your chelp, my man!

Fred [closing his bag]. All right, Missis! No offence! You needn't have neither, if you don't want. [*He half opens the door, then closes it quickly and quietly, and returns to Ellen, speaking in quite a different tone.*] I say, Missis, who's that man standing in your garden?

Ellen [glancing carelessly towards the window, but not moving from her tub]. I don't know. What's he look like?

Fred. He's got a gun under his arm.

Ellen [going to the window]. Why, that's the very chap you were talking about—the new keeper.

Fred. This is no place for me then. Which way can I get without him seeing me?

Ellen. There isn't any way—I told you.

Fred [looking very anxious indeed]. He's after me, I reckon. Can't I slip out of your front door and across the fields?

Ellen. There's no cover anywhere. Besides, they're all flooded, and you couldn't run across them.

Fred. What am I to do, then?

Ellen. I don't know.

Fred. Oh, but, Missis, do help us. *He's coming.*

Ellen [picking up the soiled print gown]. Here! Slip this on, and pretend you're washing, and I'll go into the sitting-room out of the way. He doesn't know me—and you keep your back to him.

Fred [holding the gown up helplessly]. But it'll never hide me.

Ellen. That it will! Hold your arms up! [She slips the gown on him.] There you are! [She ties her apron round him, and picking a sun-bonnet out of the basket, puts it on his head.]

Fred. Ugh! It's all wet.

Ellen. That's better than going to jail. Now roll your sleeves back, and start washing.

[As Fred begins scrubbing desperately, Ellen slips quietly to the window, and beckons urgently to her husband.]

Fred. Am I all right?

Ellen [crossing to the sitting-room door]. Yes, as long as you keep on scrubbing, and don't let him see your face. [She goes into the sitting-room, leaving the door ajar.]

Fred. But it's all sky-wannock—it's slipping—he! Missis! [He hitches the gown up and straightens the bonnet, then remembers, with horror, his bag of game. Shuffling desperately to the chair, he picks it up, looks wildly round, hears a step outside the door, and drops it into the wash-tub. When the door is opened and Tom Hudson enters, Fred is bent over the wash-tub hard at work. Ellen, peeping out of the sitting-room door,

with a finger on her lips, points to Fred's feet. Tom, noticing Fred's boots, nods to Ellen and grins.]

Tom. Good-morning, Missis ! It's a fine day for the time of year.

Fred [without looking up, and in a hoarse voice]. Morning.

Tom. You're a bit hoarse to-day, Missis, aren't you ?

Fred [bending lower over the tub]. What do you want ?

Tom. I'm looking for a poaching fellow as come this way. Have you seen anything of him ? [Fred shakes his head.] He couldn't get past, unless he's drowned himself in the Fifty Foot. Maybe he has.

Fred. Maybe.

Tom. But that wouldn't do at all. I want to catch him alive, and get him before our Agent. He'll poach him on toast. [He goes closer.] Why, Missis, your bonnet's wet. You'll catch your death of cold !

Fred. I'm used to it.

Tom. It would give me the rheumatics something awful. [Fred grunts scornfully.] You must be a tough old dame ! [He pauses to admire Fred's gown.] Why, Missis, you've got some rare stout boots on !

Fred [trying to hide his feet]. I suffer so from corns. They're my poor husband's.

Tom. Is he dead ?

Fred. Yes.

Tom. I'm very sorry to hear that ! [Fred shakes his head mournfully.] Oh, cheer up, Missis ! You'll easy find another—a well-built woman like you.

Fred. Never.

Tom. Never say die ! If you're lonely, I'll keep you company a bit. [He slips his arm round Fred's waist. Ellen, convulsed with laughter, claps her hand over her mouth.]

Fred [edging away from Tom, and clutching at his bonnet]. Gie ower !

Tom [stepping back]. Why ! You've got trousers on ! Are they your poor husband's as well ?

Fred [giving his gown a hitch]. Yes ! [He washes harder than ever.]

Tom. You might give us a kiss. Take your bonnet off, so as I can see your pretty face.

Fred [waving one arm threateningly behind him, and bending lower over the wash-tub]. Be off wi' you ! [Ellen is threatened with hysterics.]

Tom [purple with suppressed laughter]. Don't take on so. It were only my fun.

Fred [forgetting, in his desperation, his assumed sex and speaking in his natural voice]. Clear out of my house, you great vagabond !

Tom. But it ain't your house !

Fred. What do you mean ?

Tom. Well, you see—it happens to be my house.

Fred. What ! [He starts back in alarm, and the sun-bonnet falls on to his shoulders as he tears the apron violently off.]

Ellen [coming right into the room, wiping her eyes, as Tom steps back to guard the outer door]. He makes a fine lass, doesn't he ? [Fred takes a quick step towards the door, trying to get the gown off, but it sticks fast over his head.]

Tom [with his back to the door]. You'd better help him out, Nell, or he'll end your frock.

[Fred, walking backwards, still enveloped in the gown, comes to the washing basket and promptly sits down in it. Ellen hurries to him and helps him out of her gown, and unties the sun-bonnet.]

Ellen. Steady on, you great ummy-dummy !

Fred [struggling out of the basket]. Well, I'm blowed !

Ellen. You're the one as always gets the best of keepers ! [Looking round] Why ! Where's he put his bag ?

Tom. What bag ?

Ellen. He's got a hare and a brace of birds, what he's owned come out of yon spinney.

Tom [stepping forward excitedly]. That's what I want to see! Where have you put it?

Fred [glancing uneasily at the wash-tub]. I ain't got no bag!

Ellen [who has caught his glace]. What! you never . . . [going to the tub and fishing out the bag], you mucky toad! [throwing it along the floor to Tom]. You mucky toad!

Tom [taking up the bag, and looking into it with immense satisfaction, as Fred falls dejectedly into the chair by the fire]. Never mind, Missis. We've got our own back, thanks to you!

Fred. Done—by a woman! I'll never have no truck with another as long as I live.

Ellen. And a very good thing for them if you don't. [She goes to her wash-tub.] Take him away, Tom. [She ties the apron around her.] Take him off, and let me get on with my business: I've been hindered enough as it is. [She recommences her washing.]

CURTAIN

BERNARD GILBERT: *King Lear at Hordle, and Other Rural Plays.*

The Turkish Pasha

[This travel story is taken from *Eothen*, by A. W. Kinglake (1809–91), who in his early manhood made an overland tour in the Near East, visiting Constantinople, Greece, Cyprus, Palestine, the North African Desert, Cairo, Suez, Gaza, and Damascus. Servia and its capital, Belgrade, was then in the hands of the Turks and was governed by a Pasha.]

SOME people had come down to meet us with an invitation from the Pasha, and we wound our way up to

the castle. At the gates there were groups of soldiers, some smoking, and some lying flat like corpses upon the cool stones. We went through courts, ascended steps, passed along a corridor, and walked into an airy, whitewashed room, with a European clock at one end of it, and Moostapha Pasha at the other : the fine, old, bearded potentate looked very like Jove—like Jove, too, in the midst of his clouds, for the silver fumes of the *narguile* hung lightly circling round him.

The Pasha received us with the smooth, kind, gentle manner that belongs to well-bred Osmanlees ; then he lightly clapped his hands, and instantly the sound filled all the lower end of the room with slaves : a syllable dropped from his lips ; it bowed all heads, and conjured away the attendants like ghosts (their coming and their going was thus swift and quiet, because their feet were bare, and they passed through no door, but only by the yielding folds of a *purder*). Soon the coffee-bearers appeared, every man carrying separately his tiny cup in a small metal stand ; and presently to each of us there came a pipe-bearer—a grave and solemn functionary, who first rested the bowl of the *tchibouque* at a measured distance on the floor, and then, on this axis, wheeled round the long cheery tube, and gracefully presented it on half-bended knee. Already the fire (well kindled beforehand) was glowing secure in the bowl ; and so, when I pressed the amber lip to mine, there was no coyness to conquer—the willing fume came up, and answered my slightest sigh, and followed softly every breath inspired, till it touched me with some faint sense and understanding of Asiatic contentment.

Asiatic contentment ! Yet hardly, perhaps, one hour before I had been wanting my bill, and ringing for waiters in a shrill and busy hotel.

In the Ottoman dominions there is scarcely any hereditary influence except that belonging to the family of the Sultan ; and wealth, too, is a highly

volatile blessing, not easily transmitted to the descendants of the owner. From these causes it results, that the people standing in the place of nobles and gentry are official personages ; and though many (indeed the greater number) of these potentates are humbly born and bred, you will seldom, I think, find them wanting in that polished smoothness of manner and those well-undulating tones which belong to the best Osmanlees. The truth is, that most of the men in authority have risen from their humble station by the arts of the courtier, and they keep in their high estate those gentle powers of fascination to which they owe their success. Yet, unless you can contrive to learn a little of the language, you will be rather bored by your visits of ceremony ; the intervention of the dragoman is fatal to the spirit of conversation. I think I should mislead you if I were to attempt to give the substance of any particular conversation with Orientals. A traveller may write and say that “ the Pasha of So-and-so was particularly interested in the vast progress which has been made in the application of steam, and appeared to understand the structure of our machinery—that he remarked upon the gigantic results of our manufacturing industry—showed that he possessed considerable knowledge of our Indian affairs, and of the constitution of the Company, and expressed a lively admiration of the many sterling qualities for which the people of England are distinguished.” But the heap of commonplaces thus quietly attributed to the Pasha will have been founded perhaps on some such talking as this :

Pasha. The Englishman is welcome ; most blessed among hours is this, the hour of his coming.

Dragoman (to the Traveller). The Pasha pays you his compliments.

Traveller. Give him my best compliments in return, and say I’m delighted to have the honour of seeing him.

Dragoman (to the Pasha). His Lordship, this Eng-

lishman, Lord of London, Scorer of Ireland, Suppressor of France, has quitted his governments, and left his enemies to breathe for a moment, and has crossed the broad waters in strict disguise, with a small but eternally faithful retinue of followers, in order that he might look upon the bright countenance of the Pasha among Pashas—the Pasha of the everlasting Pashalik of Karaghlookoldour.

Traveller (to his Dragoman). What on earth have you been saying about London? The Pasha will be taking me for a mere Cockney. Have not I told you *always* to say, that I am from a branch of the family of Mudcombe Park, and that I am to be a magistrate for the county of Bedfordshire, only I've not qualified; and that I should have been a deputy-lieutenant, if it had not been for the extraordinary conduct of Lord Mountpromise; and that I was a candidate for Boughton-Soldborough at the last election, and that I should have won easy if my committee had not been bribed. I wish to heaven that if you *do* say anything about me, you'd tell the simple truth!

Dragoman is silent.

Pasha. What says the friendly Lord of London? is there aught that I can grant him within the Pashalik of Karaghlookoldour?

Dragoman (growing sulky and literal). This friendly Englishman—this branch of Mudcombe—this head purveyor of Boughton-Soldborough—this possible policeman of Bedfordshire—is recounting his achievements and the number of his titles.

Pasha. The end of his honours is more distant than the ends of the earth, and the catalogue of his glorious deeds is brighter than the firmament of heaven!

Dragoman (to the Traveller). The Pasha congratulates your Excellency.

Traveller. About Boughton - Soldborough? The deuce he does!—but I want to get at his views in relation to the present state of the Ottoman empire.

Tell him the Houses of Parliament have met, and that there has been a speech from the Throne pledging England to maintain the integrity of the Sultan's dominions.

Dragoman (to the Pasha). This branch of Mudcombe, this possible policeman of Bedfordshire, informs your Highness that in England the talking houses have met, and that the integrity of the Sultan's dominions has been assured for ever and ever by a speech from the velvet chair.

Pasha. Wonderful chair! Wonderful houses!—whir! whir! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!—wonderful chair! wonderful houses! wonderful people!—whir! whir! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!

Traveller (to the Dragoman). What does the Pasha mean by that whizzing? he does not mean to say, does he, that our Government will ever abandon their pledges to the Sultan?

Dragoman. No, your Excellency, but he says the English talk by wheels and by steam.

Traveller. That's an exaggeration; but say that the English really have carried machinery to great perfection. Tell the Pasha (he'll be struck with that) that whenever we have any disturbances to put down, even at two or three hundred miles from London, we can send troops by the thousand to the scene of action in a few hours.

Dragoman (recovering his temper and freedom of speech). His Excellency, this Lord of Mudcombe, observes to your Highness, that whenever the Irish, or the French, or the Indians rebel against the English, whole armies of soldiers and brigades of artillery are dropped into a mighty chasm called Euston Square, and, in the biting of a cartridge, they rise up again in Manchester, or Dublin, or Paris, or Delhi, and utterly exterminate the enemies of England from the face of the earth.

Pasha. I know it—I know all ; the particulars have been faithfully related to me, and my mind comprehends locomotives. The armies of the English ride upon the vapours of boiling caldrons, and their horses are flaming coals !—whir ! whir ! all by wheels !—whiz ! whiz ! all by steam !

Traveller (to his Dragoman). I wish to have the opinion of an unprejudiced Ottoman gentleman as to the prospects of our English commerce and manufactures ; just ask the Pasha to give me his views on the subject.

Pasha (after having received the communication of the Dragoman). The ships of the English swarm like flies ; their printed calicoes cover the whole earth, and by the side of their swords the blades of Damascus are blades of grass. All India is but an item in the ledger-books of the merchants whose lumber-rooms are filled with ancient thrones !—whir ! whir ! all by wheels !—whiz ! whiz ! all by steam !

Dragoman. The Pasha compliments the cutlery of England, and also the East India Company.

Traveller. The Pasha's right about the cutlery : I tried my scimitar with the common officers' swords belonging to our fellows at Malta, and they cut it like the leaf of a novel. Well (to the Dragoman), tell the Pasha I am exceedingly gratified to find that he entertains such a high opinion of our manufacturing energy, but I should like him to know, though, that we have got something in England besides that. These foreigners are always fancying that we have nothing but ships and railways, and East India Companies ; do just tell the Pasha that our rural districts deserve his attention, and that even within the last two hundred years there has been an evident improvement in the culture of the turnip ; and if he does not take any interest in that, at all events you can explain that we have our virtues in the country—that we are a truth-telling people, and, like the Osmanlees, are faithful in

the performance of our promises. Oh ! and by-the-bye whilst you are about it, you may as well just say, at the end, that the British yeoman is still, thank God ! the British yeoman.

Pasha (after hearing the Dragoman). It is true, it is true : through all Feringhistan the English are foremost and best ; for the Russians are drilled swine, and the Germans are sleeping babes, and the Italians are the servants of songs, and the French are the sons of newspapers, and the Greeks are the weavers of lies, but the English and the Osmanlees are brothers together in righteousness : for the Osmanlees believe in one only God, and cleave to the Koran, and destroy idols ; so do the English worship one God, and abominate graven images, and tell the truth, and believe in a book ; and though they drink the juice of the grape, yet to say that they worship their prophet as God, or to say that they are eaters of pork, these are lies—lies born of Greeks, and nursed by Jews.

Dragoman. The Pasha compliments the English.

Traveller (rising). Well, I've had enough of this. Tell the Pasha I am greatly obliged to him for his hospitality, and still more for his kindness in furnishing me with horses, and say that now I must be off.

Pasha (after hearing the Dragoman, and standing up on his divan). Proud are the sires, and blessed are the dams of the horses, that shall carry his Excellency to the end of his prosperous journey. May the saddle beneath him glide down to the gates of the happy city like a boat swimming on the third river of Paradise ! May he sleep the sleep of a child, when his friends are around him ; and the while that his enemies are abroad may his eyes flame red through the darkness—more red than the eyes of ten tigers !—farewell !

Dragoman. The Pasha wishes your Excellency a pleasant journey.

So ends the visit.

The Safety Lamp

IN the month of August 1815, George Stephenson requested his friend, Nicholas Wood, to prepare a drawing of a lamp according to the description which he gave him. After several evenings' careful deliberations the drawing was made, and shown to some of the head men about the works.

Stephenson proceeded to order a lamp to be made by a Newcastle tinman, according to his plan ; and at the same time he directed a glass to be made for the lamp. Both were received by him from the makers on the 21st October, and the lamp was taken to Killingworth for the purpose of immediate experiment.

"I remember that evening as distinctly as if it had been but yesterday," said Robert Stephenson in 1857. "Moodie came to our cottage about dusk, and asked if father had got back yet with the lamp. 'No.' 'Then I'll wait till he comes,' said Moodie ; 'he can't be long now.'

"In about half an hour in came my father, his face all radiant. He had the lamp with him ! It was at once uncovered and shown to Moodie. Then it was filled with oil, trimmed and lighted.

"All was ready, only the head-viewer hadn't arrived. 'Run over to Benton for Nicol, Robert,' said my father to me, 'and ask him to come directly ; say we're going down the pit to try the lamp.' By this time it was quite dark ; and off I ran to bring Nicholas Wood. His house was at Benton, about a mile off. There was a short cut through the church-yard, but just as I was about to pass the wicket, I saw what I thought was a white figure moving about amongst the gravestones. I took it for a ghost !

"My heart fluttered and I was in a great fright, but to Wood's house I must get, so I made the circuit

of the churchyard ; and when I got round to the other side I looked, and lo ! the figure was still there ! But what do you think it was ? Only the grave-digger plying his work at that late hour by the light of his lanthorn, set upon one of the gravestones ! I found Wood at home, and in a few minutes he was mounted and off to my father's. When I got back I was told they had just left—it was about eleven—and gone down the shaft to try the lamp in one of the most dangerous parts of the mine."

Arrived at the bottom of the shaft with the lamp, the party directed their steps towards one of the foulest galleries in the pit, where the explosive gas was issuing through a blower in the roof of the mine with a loud hissing noise. By erecting some deal boarding round that part of the gallery into which the gas was escaping, the air was made more foul for the purpose of the experiment.

After waiting about an hour, Moodie, whose practical experience of fire-damp in pits was greater than that of either Stephenson or Wood, was requested to go into the place which had thus been made foul ; and having done so, he returned, and told them that the smell of the air was such that if a lighted candle were now introduced an explosion must inevitably take place.

He cautioned Stephenson as to the danger both to themselves and to the pit if the gas took fire. But Stephenson declared his confidence in the safety of his lamp, and having lit the wick, he boldly proceeded with it towards the explosive air. The others, more timid and doubtful, hung back when they came within hearing of the blower ; and apprehensive of the danger, they retired into a safe place, out of sight of the lamp, which gradually disappeared with its bearer in the recesses of the mine.

Advancing to the place of danger, and entering within the fouler air, his lighted lamp in hand,

Stephenson held it firmly out, in the full current of the blower and within a few inches of its mouth ! Thus exposed, the flame of the lamp at first increased, then flickered, and then went out ; but there was no explosion of the gas. Returning to his companions, who were still at a distance, he told them what had occurred.

Having now acquired somewhat more confidence, they advanced with him to a point from which they could observe him repeat his experiment, but still at a safe distance. They saw that when the lighted lamp was held within the explosive mixture there was a great flame, the lamp became almost full of fire, and then it smothered out.

Again returning to his companions, he relighted the lamp, and repeated the experiment several times with the same result. At length Wood and Moodie ventured to advance close to the fouled part of the pit ; and in making some of the later trials, Mr. Wood himself held up the lighted lamp to the blower.

Before leaving the pit, Stephenson expressed his opinion that by an alteration of the lamp, which he then contemplated, he could make it burn better.

SAMUEL SMILES: *Life of George Stephenson.*

The Story of the Creation

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, Let there be light : and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good : and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.

And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth

abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on

the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

Book of Genesis.

THREE OPERA PLOTS

Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman"

THE FIRST ACT

THE curtain rises to disclose a rocky cove on a wild and rugged part of the Norwegian coast. A violent storm is raging, and skipper Daland has cast anchor in the shelter. The temporary haven is near his own home, where his daughter Senta is waiting and watching for him. The skipper, hoping for fairer weather, goes below, leaving his steersman to keep watch. Presently, the gloomy vessel of the Flying Dutchman is seen approaching weirdly through the darkness, its blood-red sails piercing the curtain of night. The Dutchman is "that mariner who boasted that his skill would steer him safely in spite of Heaven itself, and who was doomed, because of that blasphemy, to sail the seas for ever." Nothing can free him from the curse but a true woman willing to give her own life for his salvation. The devil has no belief in the virtue of women, and therefore consents to the Captain's going ashore once every seven years for the purpose of taking a wife on trial. Seven years have passed since he last set foot on earth. His time has returned, and now he is about to avail himself of his privilege, leaving his ship anchored beside the Norwegian barque.

Meanwhile, he indulges in a gloomy soliloquy. Despair has taken complete possession of him. Hope of mortal aid he has almost entirely abandoned. In a burst of frenzy he prays for death, and pleads for the judgment day to put an end to his wanderings. The crew of the phantom ship echo his piteous wail.

At this point Daland issues from his vessel and gives the stranger a cordial greeting. Senta's name is mentioned. Naturally it arrests his attention. What if this should prove to be the self-sacrificing maiden he has so long been searching for? Nursing this idea, he tempts Daland by a glimpse of the untold wealth which lies in the coffers of the eerie vessel, amassed during the endless voyage. Daland is something of a miser, and permission to woo Senta is the result of that flaunting of the Dutchman's gold. Meanwhile, the wind has shifted, and the two skippers hasten their departure for the port.

SECOND ACT

Now we are at Daland's home. The old house-keeper and a group of lighthearted, merry-making girls are chattering over their spinning-wheels. Senta sits apart, her eyes dreamily fixed on a mystifying picture on the wall—a portrait of "a pale man clad in black," the legendary Flying Dutchman. "What are you thinking about?" demand the merry-makers, in solution of Senta's abstraction. Senta replies by singing the ballad of the ill-fated mariner. Her emotion deepens during the effort, and in a burst of enthusiasm she declares that *she* will be the woman to free the weary wanderer of the main, and find him eternal peace. True, she is already betrothed; and Erik, her lover, enters while she speaks. He reminds her of old vows. But before she has had time to look seriously at the situation, Daland brings in the Dutchman, and Senta, seeing before her the living embodiment of that mysterious portrait on the wall, falls a helpless victim to the accursed nomad of the deep. Left alone with him, she vows her life to his salvation, and the curtain falls as the pair are plighting their troth.

THIRD ACT

In this act we are once more on the seashore, the sailors rejoicing at the harbour. The two vessels of the first act are again moored side by side. But, while the Norwegian's crew are rioting and feasting, the Dutchman's crew are gloomy and irresponsible. Gay damsels present baskets of food and wine ; but no answering appreciation comes from the fated vessel. The Dutchman's ship is silent as the tomb.

Suddenly the visionary sailors appear on the deck under a supernatural light. They sing a weird song, taunting their skipper with his failure as a lover. The Norwegian sailors, stricken by the uncanny scene, hurry under deck ; the giddy girls vanish ; and silence once more falls upon the two vessels.

Then Senta appears, accompanied by Erik. Erik pleads his love, but Senta is deaf to his entreaties. Has she not vowed that she will give herself as a sacrifice for the hapless Dutchman ? But the Dutchman overhears and misunderstands. He comes forward in great excitement to bid Senta farewell, and to reproach her with having forgotten her promise to him ; while Senta at the same time tries to convince him that she still means to be true. He does not wish to destroy her, and therefore warns her of the awful punishment of those who break their troth once given to him—death and damnation. She may, he says, still be spared such a fate, inasmuch as she has not yet sworn " before the Eternal One " to be his.

Senta declares that she knows his name and history, and is nevertheless ready to bring him deliverance. But the Dutchman cannot believe in his good fortune, cannot believe that her love will go so far ; and proclaiming his baleful name, he rushes on board his ship, which immediately leaves the shore. Senta attempts to follow him, but is held back by her father, Erik, and

Mary. Then breaking from them, she runs to the edge of the cliff near-by and throws herself into the sea, calling out to the Dutchman—

“ Thank thou thine angel with every breath !
Here see me, true, yea, true till death ! ”

At the same moment the phantom ship sinks with all hands. In the glow of the rising sun, above the wreck, are seen the glorified forms of Senta and the Dutchman, held in each other's embrace, rising heavenwards out of the sea.

Wagner's “ Lohengrin ”

FIRST ACT

THE opening scene is in Brabant, with the Scheldt pursuing its course—that same river which to-day flows by the busy docks of Antwerp. Henry I., surnamed the “ Fowler,” has come hither to levy a force against the threateningly invading Hungarians. Discord and anarchy are what he finds in his kingdom ; these arising chiefly out of the following circumstances : Elsa, daughter of the late Duke of Brabant, and her brother Godfrey, the heir to the throne, were left as orphans in the care of Count Frederic of Telramund. Telramund had aspired to Elsa's hand, and a promise of marriage had been given. Elsa declines to fulfil the promise, and Telramund falls a victim to the machinations of Ortrud, who is intriguing for the crown. Ortrud does not really love Telramund—“ a brave and upright soldier, honoured by all, and famous for his deeds of daring until he fell under her influence.” But she sees her opportunity in Telramund's chagrin at being refused by Elsa. She inflames his ambition, and induces him to give up Elsa

and marry herself. Next she entices Elsa's brother, Godfrey, away to the dark forest near her castle, and throwing a golden chain around his neck, changes him, by her witchery, into a swan. Returning to the castle, she tells Telramund, her husband, that she has seen Elsa drown her brother in a pool. This Telramund readily believes; and under pressure of certain threats he subsequently extorts from Elsa what he regards as an admission of her guilt. It is at this point that the action of the drama opens.

King Henry demands from Telramund the reason for the country being so disturbed. By way of answer Telramund formally declares that Elsa has made away with her brother so that she may herself succeed to the lordship of Brabant. To Henry and to everybody else concerned this seems incredible. Elsa is summoned to the royal presence. She comes, "clad in white, with sad and resigned demeanour, attempting no defence." Instead she recounts a wonderful dream she has had. She tells how a knight, clad in shining armour, leaning on his sword, with a golden horn suspended from his belt, came to her from heaven, promising help. "That knight I will await," is her answer to Henry; "*he* shall my champion be."

Elsa's trust is now to be tried. Henry thrusts his sword into the earth, and suggests testing the judgment of God by the ordeal of battle. To Elsa, the inner vision of the champion, her knight, carries more import than the menace of her enemies. She has no hesitation in accepting the challenge thrown out by the king. Neither has Telramund—he relying on Ortrud and his own strength of arm. The challenge is blared forth by the trumpeters. No reply comes. "Another summons," says Elsa, recalling the ancient appeal to Baal; "my champion was too far away to hear the first." Silence follows; Elsa is on her knees, praying. But what is this? Look up the river. There comes a boat drawn by a swan, and in

that boat, behold a knight in sparkling silver armour, leaning on his sword, with horn at his belt—the very knight of Elsa's vision.

There is great excitement as the champion disembarks under the shadow of the royal oak. Telramund gazes, struck dumb; Ortrud is seized with terror, recognizing in the swan, by the chain around its neck, Elsa's enchanted brother Godfrey. The champion says farewell to the swan, imploring it to be faithful and bring him joy on its return (the meaning of this is seen at the end of the drama). He salutes Henry, and declares that Elsa is entirely innocent of the charge laid against her. Will Elsa accept him as her champion and lover? In joyful assent she drops at his feet. But there is one essential condition, and upon that condition the entire drama turns: If the knight proves victorious, Elsa will be his for ever, but—she must never ask his name, to whom he owes his birth, the country from whence he came. If Elsa violates this solemn prohibition, then Lohengrin—for it is he—will return immediately to his father's kingdom. The condition is implicitly accepted. Lohengrin and Telramund prepare for the combat. It begins after the king has given three strokes with his sword. There is enchantment in Lohengrin's weapon: Telramund is worsted in the duel (though his life is spared), and the act closes with rejoicings over the approaching nuptials of Lohengrin and Elsa.

SECOND ACT

When the second act opens, night has fallen. We see Telramund and Ortrud on the steps of the Minster, plotting together, scheming revenge. Before them is the Palace, brilliantly lighted; rejoicings proceeding inside over the coming union of Elsa and her knight. Telramund, wrathful at Ortrud's defeated promises in the matter of the duel, turns upon her with re-

proaches. Ortrud temporizes by suggesting that Lohengrin triumphed in the fight, not by his personal prowess, but by sorcery. Moreover, if Elsa could only be lured into surprising him of his name (Samson and Delilah are recalled), he would inevitably lose his sway. For Ortrud knows that none but Elsa has the power to force a reply from her champion, by reason of her spiritual tie with him: as Wagner says, she is "the other half of his being." And then, if this should fail, there was still another resource. Deprive the knight of even a finger-joint, and his power must be lost.

Telramund derives from all this a new confidence in Ortrud's powers, and more than ever thirsts for vengeance. Suddenly Elsa, robed in white, steps out upon the balcony of the Keinenate (the women's quarters), and "breathes out the tale of her happiness to the breezes of night." Ortrud thereupon accosts her with humility, promising to secure for ever to Elsa, by her magic agency, the love of her champion knight. At first Elsa scornfully rejects the offer, but Ortrud so works on her credulity that the latter pityingly invites Ortrud to share her faith and trust. At break of day the nobles gather, in answer to the royal summons, at the Minster gate, and immediately after, the long bridal procession is seen emerging from the Keinenate. Elsa is just about to set foot on the Minster steps when Ortrud springs forward, barring her way. "What do you know of your bridegroom's name and rank?" she tauntingly demands. Lohengrin enters with king and nobles. Elsa casts herself into his arms, calling for protection from Ortrud. "What do I see! the accursed woman with thee?" he exclaims, in surprise. Elsa has perforce to admit that she ignored the injunction of her champion to have no dealings with Ortrud. "Blame me if I disobeyed thee!" she says. Lohengrin soothes her fears, and the procession starts again, the knight sternly exclaiming to Ortrud, "Away!

thou awful woman! here shall victory never be thine!" But once more the procession is stopped, this time by Telramund, who, on the very threshold of the Minster, accuses Lohengrin of having achieved his victory by sorcery. The king, however, retains his belief in Lohengrin. Telramund is pushed aside; having meanwhile sown the seeds of mistrust in Elsa's mind. Give me leave, he says, but to "wrench the smallest part, a finger-tip, and, I swear to thee, clearly shalt thou see thyself what from thee he hides; then bound to thee, never shall he leave thee. This night I shall be near to thee—call'st thou, without harm quickly it is accomplished." Elsa, it is clear, is going to break her vow to Lohengrin. The procession starts once more and files slowly into the Cathedral; then the curtain is lowered.

THIRD ACT

A solemn musical prelude, the well-known Bridal March, opens this act, Elsa and Lohengrin being meanwhile conducted—the one by the ladies, the other by the king and nobles—to the bridal chamber. After invoking blessings upon them, the procession retires, leaving the newly-wedded pair alone, for the first time. Now comes the crisis of the drama. Elsa's doubts will not be kept down. "How am I to know," she cries, "that the swan will not come some day as mysteriously as before and take my beloved from my arms?" Lohengrin vainly tries to calm her. Elsa becomes more and more insistent. May she not just whisper her husband's name to herself? Lohengrin tries by every conceivable means to avert the impending danger. He even goes so far as to hint of his origin: he "speaks of the realms of bliss he has left for her sake." But this only adds to Elsa's misgivings, to that terrible fear of losing her lord in which, as Wagner says, "lies the only necessity for

a Third Act." If Lohengrin came, as he averred, from a world of splendour, he would probably want to return, and Elsa would be unable to prevent him. And so, in her frenzied excitement, she puts the fatal question : " Speak ! who then art thou ? Tell me what is thy name ? Whence, then, hast thou come ? What is thy rank ? " Elsa has broken her vow ; the spell has vanished ; the evil is irreparable. Just then a secret door is burst open, and in marches Telramund, followed by a quartet of disaffected nobles, with swords drawn. Lohengrin lifts his sacred sword and the false knight falls dead at his feet. The body is borne away, and the king orders Elsa's maidens to bring her before him that he may proclaim her consort's rank. Day dawns and the scene closes. Then we are on the banks of the Scheldt once more. Telramund's body is brought there. Elsa, too, appears, with head bent, her anguished expression affecting even the attendants. Then her champion, her armoured knight, her husband, is seen advancing.

The army is assembled : enthusiasm greets the knight, and he is given to understand that they look to him to lead the forces to war. Alas ! this he is not free to do. He tells why he killed Telramund, and how Elsa had been tempted to violate her vow. " To treacherous advice her heart she gave away ! In reward of her mistrust's wild request, let now the answer no longer be kept back : I durst refuse it to the foe's insistence ; my name and being must I now declare. Mark well if I must shun the light ! Before the world, before the king and realm, my mystery I faithfully unveil." In a word, Lohengrin answers Elsa's question. He tells of the Sanctuary of Montsalvat and its Brotherhood of Knights ; how on their missions the power of the Grail is with them, but should their names be revealed they must either lose that power or else return to the Temple. " Now hear how I reward forbidden question," says Lohengrin.

“ The Grail it was that sent me here to you. My father Parsifal wears its crown. Its Knight am I, and Lohengrin my name.”

The secret is out, and Lohengrin’s mystic power vanishes. Elsa has erred, and Lohengrin must leave her. The swan appears once more with the boat. “ So soon to see thee ne’er I thought,” says Lohengrin. “ After a year slowly had passed—the period of thy slavery—then by the Grail released at last, I hoped my swan again to see.” Lohengrin must depart. He bids a last farewell to Elsa, giving her his conquering sword and his horse to aid Godfrey should he be permitted to return. He moves towards the boat, and Ortrud appears, the moment of her triumph having come. The chain by which the swan draws the boat was, she says, attached by herself. “ That chain, which at a glance I knew, changed to a swan this dukedom’s heir. Hence by the swan thy knight is carried. Thanks! thou hast served me well, indeed. The knight, if longer he had tarried, thy brother from the spell had freed.” The swan, in a word, is none other than Elsa’s brother, Godfrey, transformed to that shape by her magic arts. But Lohengrin has still some resource left. He sinks on his knees in silent prayer, and in answer to his petition the white dove of the Grail descends from the sky and detaches the chain from the swan. The swan disappears and the missing heir of Brabant takes its place. Ortrud’s witchcraft is undone. Elsa clasps her restored brother to her breast and sinks lifeless into his arms.

Wagner's "The Meistersingers"

THE REAL MEISTERSINGERS

BEFORE proceeding to outline the story of Wagner's great humorous opera, it seems expedient to give the reader some account of the real "Meistersingers"—the artisan poets of Germany, who had a certain affinity with, and yet were entirely different from, the troubadours of France. It is not so long since the craft became extinct. Twelve old Meistersingers held regular meetings in a little inn at Ulm as late as 1830. By 1839 the number had dwindled to four; and the quartet solemnly decided that the society of Mastersingers be disbanded for ever. It is said that the last of these interesting survivals died in 1876.

The Meistersingers had their origin in the early part of the fourteenth century, and their golden age was about the time of the Lutheran Reformation. A versifying mania had taken possession of the lower classes. As one historian puts it, blacksmiths, weavers, shoemakers, doctors, and schoolmasters sought to mend their fortunes by making verses. Companies of these persons formed themselves into guilds or corporations, calling themselves "Mastersingers," and holding periodical gatherings at which they criticized each other's productions. They composed their verses in conformity with certain strict guild rules; accuracy, industry, and painstaking care, rather than an unfeathered expression of the true spirit of poetry, were the main features of the Mastersinger's art. "Every fault was marked, and he who made the fewest was awarded the prize and permitted to take apprentices." When his apprenticeship was over the young man was admitted to the corporation as a full-fledged Meistersinger.

Expert writers who have studied the subject have shown that there was a guild of Meistersingers at Mainz as early as 1311. The idea caught the popular fancy, and before the fourteenth century was out, few towns in Germany were without their guild of Meistersingers. It was, however, at Nuremberg, and in the time of Hans Sachs (1494-1575), that the school attained its highest development. Nuremberg, which still preserves much of its ancient dignity, was, in fact, the heart and shrine of the mastersong. The circumstance is not forgotten to-day. Pilgrims find their way to the typical, mediæval town, visit St. Catherine's, where the formal contests of the Meistersingers were held; see the quaintly decorated cabinet that hangs on the church wall and bears the portraits of four "Meisters"; and indulge in dreams of the dead days as they pass through the streets once trod by Albert Dürer and Hans Sachs. Who does not know Longfellow's fine poem on Nuremberg?—

Here Hans Sachs, the cobbler poet, laureate of the gentle craft,
Wisest of the Twelve Wise Masters, in huge folios sang
and laughed.

Vanished is the ancient splendour, and before my dreamy eye
Wave these mingled shapes and figures like a faded tapestry.
Not thy Councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's regard,
But thy painter Albrecht Dürer, and Hans Sachs, thy cobbler-bard.

Sachs makes a considerable figure in Wagner's comedy, and it is therefore of interest to note that he was an historical character. No fewer than 6,048 works are attributed to this cobbler-bard, 4,275 of which are "Meisterlieder." Whatever he touched seems to have become either music or poetry under

his hand! That Wagner idealized him is obvious enough, for no shoemaker could have been the philosopher, poet, artist, commoner, and genial Romanticist that Sachs is made to appear in this engaging drama. But our only concern here is to emphasize the fact that Sachs walked the earth in his day, and took a leading part in these competitions of the Meistersingers which Wagner has so humorously satirized.

So, too, with other Meistersingers in the opera—Pogner, Kothner, Zorn, Nachtigal, Beckmesser, and the rest—their names are all to be found in the treatise of Christoph Wagenseil, published in 1697. From this learned tome Wagner admittedly gained his information about the old Meistersingers, their contests, and their quaint manners. But he worked up the story in his own way to suit his own particular purpose. The charming love episode, for example, is entirely his conception, for no real-life candidate for admission to the Meistersingers' guild ever won his bride as a prize in the song contest. This is another tribute to the dramatic genius of the master whose delightful comedy we now proceed to describe.

FIRST ACT

The period is the middle of the sixteenth century. When the curtain rises, we see the interior of St. Catherine's Church at Nuremberg. The choir is in front, and the scene is so arranged that the last rows of seats in the nave are visible at the back of the stage. The precise time is the afternoon of the eve of St. John's feast (Midsummer Day), and the assembled congregation are singing the last verse of a hymn to the Baptist. During the singing a quiet flirtation is going on between Eva Pogner, the daughter of Veit Pogner (a rich goldsmith, one of the most substantial members of the Meistersingers' guild), and Walther Von Stolzing, a young knight from Franconia. We

see Walther leaning against a pillar, evidently paying little heed to the service. He has fallen in love at first sight, and the charming Eva is by no means indisposed to his advances.

When the congregation has dispersed, Walther approaches Eva, enters into conversation with her, and asks if she is married. Her maid, Magdalena, explains that she is to be married on the morrow, though she does not yet know who is to be the bridegroom. It must be understood here that one of the usual singing contests has been arranged. Walther has already made the acquaintance of Eva's father; but Pogner, concerned about the dignity of the Mastersingers' craft, has declared that his daughter shall marry the successful candidate in the coming vocal competition.

Walther decides that he will enter the lists, if necessary. Meantime he will approach the maiden herself directly, if clandestinely. Eva shows herself not unwilling to listen. With womanly ingenuousness she feigns to have left her scarf behind, and Magdalena (for "two's company but three's none") sets off to find it. She returns before the lovers have had their talk out, and is dispatched once more, this time in search of a brooch. The brooch is secured, but still the lovers are whispering in each other's ears. Magdalena accordingly goes away the third time—now for a hymn-book. Then, when she has finally returned, Walther openly avows his passion for Eva. Magdalena is somewhat shocked that a love affair should be conducted in church in this unblushing manner; and she interposes to say that until the singing competition has been held it will be impossible to tell who is to be Eva's husband.

At this stage David, an apprentice to Hans Sachs, the shoemaker and poet, arrives with other apprentices of the Mastersingers to prepare seats for the forthcoming examination in song. David, let it be

remarked, is Magdalena's lover. Walther realizes that, if he is to have the slightest chance of gaining Eva's hand, he must enter the contest. He announces this intention, and Magdalena refers him to David, who, she says, in effect, will coach him up for his examination by the Mastersingers. After the two women have left the church David begins his instructions, rattling off a ludicrous description of the various technicalities required to produce a correct "master-song." The candidate, it seems, must become a singer and recognize at sight all the different tones—the "short," the "long," the "fragrant hawthorn," the "frog," the "cinnamon stalk," the "faithful pelican," and so on. Next, he must show himself a poet and write words to the air. Finally, he is required to produce something in which both words and music are his own, and in which only seven breaches of recognized rule are allowed.

Before the "coaching" business is finished, the booth usually erected for the "marker" in the contest has been set up, and the Mastersingers now enter. First come Pogner (Eva's father) and Beckmesser, a pompous elderly widower, who presumes to aspire to the hand of Eva. Beckmesser, being the eldest of the Masters, has been appointed marker for the occasion; his duty being to sit in a curtained box and note every infraction of established rule which may occur in the candidate's song.

The Masters being all assembled, Pogner tells of his intention to bestow his daughter on the victorious candidate in the ensuing contest. Beckmesser is naturally anxious, and when Walther is presently brought forward as a candidate, the marker eyes him with uneasy suspicion. Pogner, it should be said, has left his daughter the option of refusing the hand of the successful contestant, but he insists that she must marry inside the Mastersingers' guild. This plan of his gives rise to discussion—some approving it; others,

Beckmesser among them, disapproving. Hans Sachs, now one of the assembly, quizzes Beckmesser on the point, remarking that *they* at least are too old to be seriously considered as aspirants for Eva's hand. There is much noise and commotion over this discussion, especially on the part of the apprentices.

But now Walther is about to be heard. He intimates love and nature as his theme, and proceeds to sing his song. Being self-taught and quite unfamiliar with the traditional rigid rules, he proves himself entirely incorrect according to the laws of the guild. Beckmesser, who has been very busy over his slate, declares that he never heard such a disgraceful exhibition ; that there are positively more mistakes than he can keep note of. The genial, sympathetic Sachs wishes to hear Walther out to the end, insisting that, though not according to rule, his song is truly poetical ; but the youth is declared to have "mis-sung and failed," and the meeting dissolves in confusion. Walther vainly endeavours to make himself heard : Sachs intercedes for him, the other Masters protesting ; Beckmesser scolds and points out more faults ; and Pogner shows himself deeply distressed lest his daughter's already engaged affections make it impossible for him to carry out his novel scheme. Such is the situation when the curtain falls.

SECOND ACT

The Second Act passes in one of Nuremberg's quaintly picturesque streets, with Pogner's house on one side and Sachs' on the other. It is now the eve of St. John's festival, and the summer night is drawing on. The apprentices are putting up the shutters, singing, and chaffing each other (particularly David) the while. Pogner and Eva enter, returning from a walk ; and in the conversation that follows Pogner discovers the state of his daughter's affections. From Magda-

lena, her attendant (Pogner having now gone into the house), Eva learns of her lover's failure. She determines to ask Sachs for advice.

Presently the shoemaker seats himself at his work in the door of his shop. "The balmy air of the evening, the scent of the elder tree, turn his thoughts to the poetry which he heard at the trial. What though it outraged the rules of the Masters, and even puzzled him? Within it lay real power. The singer (Walther) sang not to meet rules, but because utterance was demanded by his feelings. Let the Masters rage; Hans Sachs is well pleased." Such is the substance of the famous monologue in this act.

Eva emerges from her father's house, and in a delightful scene with Sachs, suggests that, to escape marriage with the vain old Beckmesser, she would gladly marry Sachs himself. The shoemaker (though he loves Eva) discourages the idea and leaves her after learning, what he has suspected, that she is really in love with Walther. Next moment Eva is in the arms of the Franconian knight. Walther, full of resentment against the Masters, proposes an immediate elopement. Eva consents, vowing she will have no one but him. Sachs, however, from his shop-door, has overheard much of the conversation. He has other plans for compassing the happiness of the pair, and he resolves to thwart their present scheme. Consequently, as they are about to depart, he throws the strong light of his lantern on them where they are standing. They slink into the shadow, and just as they are proceeding to retire down another street, Beckmesser, lute in hand, approaches for the purpose of serenading Eva. As the old "marker" begins to tune his instrument, Sachs brings his bench into the doorway and starts work, singing lustily, and pounding vigorously at his last.

In answer to Beckmesser's inquiry about this prodigious noise, Sachs replies that he is trying to finish

the shoes which Beckmesser himself had demanded of him that very day. Here Magdalena, personating Eva, shows herself at the window, and Beckmesser endeavours to sing his song to her. He is very effectually prevented by the racket still kept up by the shoemaker. This leads to an agreement between the pair : Sachs will act as "marker" while Beckmesser sings, the shoemaker correcting each error by a stroke of his hammer.

A most comical scene ensues. Sachs had remarked that Beckmesser's shoes would be finished before Beckmesser's song. And so it turns out. The shoemaker's blows come fast and furious ; Beckmesser, in his rage, sings louder and louder. At last the neighbours, roused by the din, come out to put a stop to it. A general *mélée* follows ; and David, realizing that Beckmesser has been serenading his sweetheart, Magdalena, attacks the old fellow with a cudgel. In the midst of the uproar Sachs comes out of his shop, seizes Walther by the arm (he had resolved to escape with Eva during the confusion), takes him into his own house, and sends Eva across the way to her father. The night-watchman's horn is heard in the distance, the crowd disperses, and the beaten Beckmesser limps away.

THIRD ACT

The Third Act opens in the interior of Sachs' shop. The shoemaker is seen in reverie, with a volume resting on his knees. It is the morning of the eventful day. David, his apprentice, fails to rouse Sachs out of his brooding humour, though there is a diverting scene between the pair, in which David, being asked to sing the festival lesson, forgets himself so far as to begin the verses to St. John to the tune of Beckmesser's serenade. When Sachs is left alone, he breaks into the second great monologue of the opera,

"Wahn, Wahn ; überall Wahn" (Madness, madness ; everywhere madness), a fine expressive piece, the entire text of which must be read in order to be understood. At its conclusion Walther enters, descending from the room in which he has passed the night. He informs Sachs of "a wondrous, lovely dream" he has had, in which an idea for a song has been communicated to him. Sachs bids him put it into verse and make a "mastersong" of it. Walther, hesitating at first, obeys. He begins, in fact, the song by which he is subsequently hailed the victor in the contest. Sachs stops him at various points with hints and reproofing instructions.

Finally the shoemaker's entire approval is gained ; he puts the song on paper, and the two leave the room together to prepare for the festival. Beckmesser now comes limping by, and seeing the room empty, enters. His eye catches the paper which Sachs has left on the table. He concludes that the shoemaker is the author of the newly-written song—that by it he means to compete for the hand of Eva. Hearing footsteps approaching, Beckmesser hastily pockets the manuscript, and on Sachs entering, accuses him of rivalry and treachery. To Beckmesser's surprise, Sachs tells him that he may have the song, adding that under no circumstances will he claim it as his own.

The old pedant, knowing Sachs' fame as a poet, is overjoyed, thinking himself now assured of success. The events of the previous night, he says, had driven his own song quite out of his head. Might he use this one ? "Certainly," replies the shoemaker, "but be careful how you study it, for it is not easy." "And you will promise me never to say that it is yours ?" "Willingly ! " And so exit Beckmesser.

Eva, in her betrothal dress, now arrives, protesting that something is amiss with one of her shoes. Sachs, smiling incredulously, pretends to put it right. Walther, richly clad, comes next, standing spellbound at

the sight of Eva. Sachs suggests that a third stanza might now be added to the prize-song. This is done, and Walther sings it. Eva, deeply moved, throws herself into Sachs' arms, saying that she has reached a new understanding of him and herself. David and Magdalena enter, and Sachs announces that a master-song has been made. He promotes David from apprentice to journeyman, that he may hear the song, which an apprentice could not honour, and then he invites Eva to speak.

The company now start for the field of contest, and the scene changes to a meadow by the river-side. Various guilds with their banners arrive; last of all the Mastersingers. Pogner and his daughter appear together, and are assigned the place of honour on the platform. The beloved Sachs, after being greeted by one of his own songs, addresses the assembly, intimating the terms of the competition. Beckmesser, as the senior candidate, is the first to be called. He has been trying in vain to master the appropriated song, and he is in the last depths of despair, trembling in every limb. He is perfectly certain no one will understand his song, but he relies on Sachs' popularity.

Alas! whether Sachs' writing was indistinct, or his own brain was muddled—probably both—Beckmesser makes such arrant nonsense of the words that at last the listeners burst into a united roar of laughter. Beckmesser, in a fury, turns on Sachs, declaring that, since the song is his, *he* is the author of the fiasco. Sachs, of course, promptly denies the paternity of the song, adding that Beckmesser best knows how he came by it. It is a very good song when properly sung, says the shoemaker, in effect. And then, looking round the assembly, he picks out Walther and asks him to give the correct rendering.

The young knight comes forward and sings his song. By popular acclamation he is awarded the

prize, and with it Eva's hand. Walther, satisfied with having gained his bride, is for declining the added glory of being invested with the insignia of the Meistersingers' guild. Sachs, however, points out to him that it would be rude to refuse the honour. The victor yields, whereupon Eva snatches the laurel from her lover and places it on the brow of Sachs.

COMMENTARY

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Most of the following questions can be used in the study of any story, long or short :

1. Do you approve of the title ? Does it make you want to read the story ? Can you suggest a better title ?
2. How would you describe the opening of the story—striking, ordinary, tame, abrupt, etc. ?
3. Does the story conclude in a satisfactory manner—*i.e.* is the ending definite, and does it clinch the main idea of the story ? Could you guess, as you read the story, how it was going to end ?
4. How would you classify the story—fable, myth, legend, parable, allegory, adventure story, Nature story, dramatic story, travel story, etc. ?
5. Why did the author tell the story—to drive home a moral, to amuse you, to instruct you, to show a model character for your imitation ?
6. Is there any "back scene" or setting to the story, and, if so, what is its nature ? Is the weather of importance ?
7. Where is the high point, climax, or crisis ? (There may be more than one.)
8. How many characters does the story contain—human or otherwise ? Are they all of equal importance or do some of them dominate the story ? Could any of the characters have been omitted without loss ? Do all the characters act naturally and plausibly ?
9. Where did the author gain the material for the story—from Nature, from experience in the world of men, from books, or from his own imagination ?
10. Is there any fun or humour in the story ? (N.B.—These two things are not the same.)

The House-dog and the Wolf (page 9). The fable is the oldest form of story. A true fable must have a clear moral, lesson, or application which must be true for any race or country. A fable must also be terse, and need not show any detailed background or have any particular setting. *Æsop* is the most famous of the early fabulists, and in his short stories animals usually discuss human affairs.

This is the pattern fable. It is short—a story intended to teach a moral lesson becomes tedious if long drawn out. It is tersely expressed—not a single unnecessary word. It contains a truth which appeals to every man and woman of every country and every age. Its background is skilfully suggested without any elaborate description. The characters are few and are clearly seen against the moonlit background. There is a slight element of quiet humour in the situation.

Note that the use of the present tense, known as the "historic present," in the conversation gives a lively air to the story.

The Old Woman and the Physician (page 10). This is rather a short story than a perfect fable, and the title might have been "The Biter Bit" or "Served him Right." What is the difference in character between the idea of this story and that of "The House-dog and the Wolf"? In what other ways do the two stories differ?

Note that these two fables of *Æsop* were translated by Thomas James in 1848, so that his language is to us a little "old-fashioned." Where?

The Unstrung Bow (page 11). This fable shows clearly who came first, *Æsop* or *Phædrus*, and by its mention of the Athenians reminds us to which ancient country the former belonged. *Phædrus* was a Latin writer of the first century—that is, some seven hundred years after *Æsop*, who is said to have been "deformed to the highest degree: flat-nosed, hunch-backed, and his complexion so swarthy that he took his very name from it, for *Æsop* is the same as *Ethiop*—the most scandalous figure of a man that was ever heard of"; but his mind was as strong and wise and beautiful as his person was ungainly, so that, if he had known *our* fables, he might have said he was *Beauty and the Beast* rolled into one!

This fable also calls attention to a universal truth. Can you put this truth into simple language?

The Shipwreck of Simonides (page 11). Here the moral or theme stands at the beginning of the story, which is hardly a fable in the *Æsopian* sense. It is a short story of adventure with a roughly painted "back scene," vigorous action, and many characters.

Which poet would you have been proud to save from shipwreck?

The Elephant and the Jackal (page 12). This is a Hindu fable earlier than those of *Æsop*, for it was not the ugly Greek who invented the animal story but the Hindus, though you may come to the conclusion that he improved on the idea in some respects. There is, however, something very engaging about the Hindu animals, as you will probably feel.

What is the moral of this particular fable? How does the story stand the tests of brevity, terseness, clearness, suitable background, characterization?

The Monkeys and the Bell (page 13). Here the moral stands at the head of the story as in the fable of Simonides, and at the end as well, so rounding off the tale with true literary art. It is a pathetic story reminding one of early life in and near great forests with their many terrifying noises and no less terrifying silences.

Do you think the woman deserved her reward?

The Three Rogues (page 14). This story shows what can be done by suggestion. Keep on telling a person he *looks* unwell and he will end by *being* unwell. It is also a warning—against whom or what?

There is an excellent simile at the foot of page 14.

The Poor Man who became a Great King (page 15). This is another curious Hindu tale of a double character, but more of an adventure story than a true fable, though it has, of course, a definite moral or lesson which is set out at the end of the narrative. What is your frank opinion of this moral?

It is interesting to compare the story with *Giant Golden-beard* on page 99 of this book and with the story

entitled *The Man born to be King* in No. 11 of this Series. The central idea of Hans Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling* (see No. 109 of this Series) is also somewhat similar.

A Raven, etc.; The Crane, etc. (page 18). This double fable lacks the terseness and crispness of those of Æsop, and it is not easy to follow the action and keep all the characters in mind. But the Hindu story-teller had plenty of time, and the climate of his country did not make him active but rather reflective, as are most of the animals of his fables. There is, however, something very amusing about their way of talking.

The House of Cards (page 21). This example, by a French writer (1755-94), is well told and without padding. The "back scene" of the story is also well filled in, and combined with the action makes a good moving picture. Can you put the lesson or moral of the story into a short sentence?

Jupiter and the Horse (page 22). This fable, translated from the German of Lessing (1729-81) has an Æsopian flavour, and is probably drawn from early times. Some people say that the last words spoken by Jupiter in this story are still true. Consider "back scene" (if any), terseness, characters, and crisis or high point. What is the moral?

The Beasts striving for Precedence (page 23). Here is a story which is not so simple as those we have been reading. What was the conclusion of the whole matter? And why did the Ape and the Donkey remain till the last? Does the story apply to men and women?

Fortune and the Beggar (page 25). This is a Russian fable by Kriloff (1768-1844), and a very good one, as you will no doubt agree when you have applied the usual tests. When would *you* have asked Fortune to stop? Here, then, more than two thousand years after Æsop, and many more after the Hindu fabulists, men were still teaching moral lessons and worldly wisdom by means of the short story known as the fable.

Envy burning Itself (page 26). This is called a fable in the collection from which it has been taken. How far does it resemble the true fables we have been studying, and how does it differ from them?

It had evidently been passed down by word of mouth long before books were printed, so that it is strictly a folk-tale or, if you like, a legend—that is, an early story which *may* have some truth in it. Those who are interested in the fable should study *Aesop's and Other Fables* in Everyman's Library.

Odysseus and Polyphemus (page 27). This is a very famous story of Ancient Greece drawn from the poem known as the *Odyssey*, which is said to have been written by a poet named Homer, of whom we know very little and whose very existence has been doubted. It is clearly an imaginative story, perhaps based on a few facts which have been freely used and improved upon to make a good story. It may be classed as a myth or legend.

What are its qualities? (A good way to find out is to compare it with the fable point by point.) Does it teach anything, and, if so, what? Is there any humour in it? With whom do you sympathize?

The Good Samaritan (page 36). This story is classed as a parable. How does it differ from (1) a fable, (2) a myth or legend?

Is it intended to teach anything, and, if so, what?

The language is very beautiful but is not that of to-day, because it was translated from Greek three hundred years ago. Every word tells. Note the difference between heart (*i.e.* feeling), soul (*i.e.* spirit), strength (*i.e.* will-power), and mind (*i.e.* powers of thought).

The Light of Truth (page 37). This story is taken from a book by Mrs. Gatty entitled *Parables from Nature*. How does it differ from a fable and from the New Testament parable you have just studied? Why is it divided into portions by lines of points? What is the lesson or moral of the story? Is it simply and clearly taught or otherwise? What is the meaning of the title?

Which do you consider the best word picture of this tragic story?

The Weeds (page 44). Consider carefully the differences between this Nature story and the one you have just read.

How would you classify this story? Does it contain any moral or lesson, and, if so, how can it be expressed?

Which parts of this story are actually true? Which of the plants named would you be able to recognize?

King Arthur's Last Battle (page 50). So little is really known of the British king Arthur that he is often spoken of as a "legendary monarch"—that is to say, the stories told of him and his knights are legends with little, if any, foundation in known facts.

These Arthur legends were handed down by word of mouth for many generations, and when printing found its way to England, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, the story of the great king's life and deeds was one of the first to be printed. This explains the old-fashioned style and language of the story, though you will find it easy enough to grasp its meaning.

You will notice that the author does not use quotation marks. Does it matter? Which other great book omits them?

The "last great battle" is said to have been fought somewhere in the West Country, Arthur's knight and nephew, Sir Mordred or Modred, having become a traitor to his lord.

Study the qualities of the story—its clear word pictures; its dramatic situations; the descriptions; the effective repetitions; its grandeur; its pitifulness; the simplicity of the language. If possible, read now Tennyson's poem, *The Death of Arthur*.

The Story of Augustine (page 56). The Venerable Bede was a priest in the monastery of Jarrow and lived more than twelve hundred years ago. His "history" was chiefly hearsay, "the tradition of our elders and ancestors," as he calls it. The story of the boys in the market-place was probably a legend, but that of Augustine may be true at least in outline, so that this famous passage from Bede's *History* is of a compound character.

What is his object in telling this story? Was it similar to that of Malory?

Legend and History (page 61). Edward Augustus Freeman was professor of history at Oxford about fifty years ago. He spent his time in finding out the real truth about history, and especially about the early days of our country's story.

As you will see from the pages you have just read, he loved the old picturesque stories, but he was careful to say which were true and which were merely made up or invented—that is to say, what was history and what was legend.

What useful warning is given you on pages 64 and 67.

Of what use to the reader of history are the old legends told about King Alfred?

Try to imagine and to explain simply how legends would grow up round the life of some great or prominent man or woman.

What is your opinion of the character of a king about whom such a story as that of the burning of the cakes could be told and repeated?

A legend would be told by one teller after another until a man who could write heard it, and he might then write it down. But his book would be seen by few, and the story would live in the mouths of the people and be told again and again and yet again—with what probable result to the story?

Suppose that A *reads* a story to B, and a week later B tells it to C, and a week later C tells it to D, and so on up to F; then F writes it down and compares it with A's written story. I wonder if and how the two versions of the same story would differ? (This experiment might be profitably made.)

The Story of Wat Tyler (page 68). At what point in reading this story did you first discover that the writer had no sympathy with the followers of Tyler?

Who was the writer? His dates are 1337-1410, and King Richard II. reigned from 1377 to 1399. Froissart was therefore a "contemporary chronicler." Would you accept all he says as true history? If not, say why.

So far as we know he was not present at the events he describes; and even if he had been present he could not

have heard and seen everything he reports. How do you think he got his details of speech and happenings?

What do you conclude about the use of the *imagination* and the influence of *hearsay* and *prejudice* or *bias* in history stories?

The Cup of Water (page 74). Is this story told or retold? Why did the authoress write the story? How would you describe or classify it? Remember that a history story can be "founded on fact" like the story of Tyler.

Whence did Miss Yonge draw the details of the story such as the scenery, etc.? Are any of them improbable, or do they all convince you of their rightness and suitability? Does she invent or imagine any of the conversation?

What is your thought about the king's final action? Consider beginning, ending, and climax of this story.

Half a Crown's Worth of Fighting (page 77). How would you classify this story?

Why does Scott write: "Some part of the above story is matter of *tradition*"? Does this remark apply to any other story you have recently read in this book, and, if so, which story?

Where is the climax of this story?

Do you think that the tale is well told? Say why you think so.

Did Scott approve of this bloodthirsty exhibition?

The Night after Hastings (page 79). To what class does this story belong? Is it founded on fact or connected with fact?

What is the definite "fact" which it recalls, and in which part of the story is this event briefly described?

Does any part of the story appear to you to be improbable? What would the writer study carefully before he wrote it?

Does the author make his story appear to be real, and, if so, how does he contrive to do so?

What historical information can be gathered by a careful reading of this story—e.g. about the state of the English Church, the use of Latin as a means of commun-

cation, the dialects of England, the civilization of the Normans, etc.

Manoa the Golden (page 85). Here is another writer who has taken at least his outline from history.

Note what he tells about the source of his story. Master Samuel Purchas collected accounts of voyages from sailors and others, and published them in the year 1625 under the title of *Purchas His Pilgrimes*—i.e. *Purchas' Pilgrims*.

What do you think were the "obvious reasons" that made Purchas omit this story from his book?

(It is probable that the author made it up himself in the style of the stories collected by Purchas.)

Was there any connection between the priest's drug and the sight of Manoa described by the narrator? (Note the doines of Amias Thyn.)

What is the idea of this story?

Are beginning and ending ordinary or unusual? Where is the climax or highest point of the narrative?

Giant Golden-beard (page 99). This is clearly a made-up or imaginative story with no foundation in fact—really a folk-tale told by grandmothers from generation to generation and probably growing like a rolled snowball. But not even a folk-tale is entirely made up out of people's heads. Can you discover any ideas or even germs of ideas which might possibly have been drawn from real life?

The king and the child in a box is familiar (see page 228), and one can imagine how glad grandmother's village hearers would always be to learn how the cruel monarch was well punished.

The chief characteristics of this story are its inventiveness and its sustained interest.

The Bottle Neck (page 105). This story has been called "a novel in miniature." What does this expression mean?

A novel must, as a rule, have a love story, a definite plot or scheme, a central connecting thought, and a definite ending, not necessarily "happy," but satisfactory. It must be true to life, but must consist of the interesting select bits of experience, missing out the dull

days. The people must be clearly drawn so that they can be seen and remembered, and there must be adventure, even if all the action takes place in one room and the adventure is of a mental kind. Consider this story from these points of view.

Who is the real hero of this story ?

Divide the story into definite parts or chapters, giving each chapter a title.

How could the chapters be filled out so as to make the story much longer ? Take one of the chapters—say, that which tells of the picnic—and try to fill it out with further description and conversation.

Make a collection of the wise sayings or comments upon human life which occur in this tale—e.g. "What one is born to may be seen in the structure."

Choose subjects for pictures which could be used to illustrate this story.

Can any one really think about nothing at all ?

"Blown into life." What does this mean ?

Do you think the incidents of this story impossible ?

Write a note on the sentence, "It was entirely its own master, but one may get tired even of that." Has this thought any relation to the lines of Wordsworth :

"Me this unchartered freedom tires,
I feel the weight of chance desires" ?

In what stage of its career was the bottle neck most useful and least harmful ?

Is this a story of your own country ? How do you know ?

How can you tell that it is not a story of the present day ?

What do you think of the people who found the bottle ? What would you have done with the piece of paper ?

Make a guess as to the country where the bottle was filled with seed-corn.

The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story (page 116). This is a folk-tale of another type told originally to little black pickaninnies in African huts or kraals, carried to America by slaves intended for the plantations, retold (in negro English) in that country by the negroes, and finally

collected by an American writer and student of folk-lore. One wonders what the original Brer Rabbit was like—in Central Africa!

The language is delicious and worth investigating a little. The big-road is the main road as distinguished from what the plantation negroes called the "nigh-cuts." One must guess at the meaning of "segashuate," a beautiful word, and of "*natal* stuffin'," perhaps that with which one was *born* or perhaps *natural*. The metaphors drawn from plantation life are also suggestive—"Whar he broke his merlasses jug"; "come ter de een'er de row"; "boss er de whole gang"; "bin swop off mighty bad."

Blanca Flor (page 120). This folk-tale comes from Spain. The moral appears to be that when a young prince falls in love he ought to choose the daughter of a magician as she has probably inherited some of her father's powers! Here is a guessing story. Why is the power of a magician like the scent followed by a blood-hound?

The story is almost breathlessly told, and that is good art, for the events were certainly of the kind which took away the breath. No words are wasted over description, but the background is cleverly suggested.

Where do you think the climax occurs?

Rip Van Winkle (page 126). The historical connection of this world-famous legend is indicated in the story itself. So renowned is the story that Rip Van Winkle has become a name for any one who becomes hopelessly old-fashioned or out of touch with his times. Study the scenic parts of the story, for they are very beautiful. The writer is also very clever at suggesting in a few words the appearance of a man or woman.

Which do you think the climax of the story?

The Defeat of Time (page 145). In this story Charles Lamb sets his fancy free in order to draw attention to the marvellous imaginings of Shakespeare, but he uses a little true history in one part of his fantastic story—fantastic in the sense of being a *fantasy*, which is a good description of this particular story, and might be used for many others in this book.

How did Shakespeare rescue fairies from oblivion? What can be enjoyed in fairy tales even by those who no longer "believe" in fairies?

What is meant by truth of idea as distinguished from truth of fact? Which is of greater importance?

An Answered Prayer (page 151). Here is a true modern story of travel in Central Europe.

The story begins without preparation or in the abrupt manner. Have you noted this method of beginning without preparation of the reader's mind in any other story of this book? Note how the story explains itself as you read on.

Where is the climax of the story? Note how the writer leads up to it right from the beginning of the narration.

The story shows, among other things, how legends sometimes originate in remote places.

The Sexton and the Goblins (page 156). This "ghost story" is shown in its proper setting so as to give the necessary atmosphere to the tale, as well as to excuse its faults.

It was written when Dickens was a young man, and shows his power of taking hold of the reader's mind and feelings, and of keeping up his intense and excited interest until the crisis is reached.

But it has its faults. There is something not quite satisfactory about the nature of the "pictures" shown in the goblins' cinema. Consider, for example, the speed of the changes described near the top of page 166; and the scale of the picture on page 167 which showed trees waving in the breeze as well as the ant creeping forth to her daily toil. The reader feels more comfortable when he is expected to conjure up *mental* pictures as in the lower part of page 167.

Can you suggest any other way in which Gabriel might have been taught the necessary lesson?

The Hordle Poacher (page 171). This writer chooses to tell his story in the form of a play. This form gives most prominence to the conversation, the descriptive or

narrative parts of the story being found in the "stage directions," for which the printer uses italic type. The "back scene" of this particular play is painted in words in the paragraph at the head beginning "Holt-in-the-Marsh." A skilful play-writer can also convey a certain amount of description and narration in the conversational part of his play-story.

A play tells a story, but in form and structure it is a story of a special kind, a story for acting, and the writer must keep this fact steadily in mind. The events of most stories are spread over a longer period of time than is allowed for acting the play, and the writer must arrange his material so that events covering this longer period are "telescoped" into the time spent in watching the play being acted. There is often more or less change of scene in a story, but in a play the events must be grouped so that there is as little change of place as possible, and in a one-act play like *The Hordle Poacher* none at all. The play must also be compact in action or idea, not discursive or rambling, but work steadily, without turning aside, up to the climax or high point, which is usually at or near the end.

Does *The Hordle Poacher* satisfy these tests of a good play? Further, is it lively and interesting with some surprise in it, or does it drag along in a dull, heavy manner?

What is the idea of the play? Which character comes best out of it? Be quite frank. In what special way does the keeper's wife show her cleverness?

Is there any fun in the play—and, if so, where?

The Turkish Pasha (page 185). This visit was paid in 1842. A visitor of to-day could tell of still more wonderful things, but would a Turkish pasha be so greatly astonished to hear of them?

Why does the author use the dialogue form in the most exciting part of his story?

How would you classify this narrative? Why did the author tell this story?

The Safety Lamp (page 192). How do you classify this story? Is there a more exciting one among all the imaginative or made-up stories which you have read in this book? Where is the crisis of the story?

Could a little play be made of this story? If not, for what reason or reasons?

What made Stephenson so fearless? If you do not think he was brave, how would you describe him?

The Story of the Creation (page 194). We conclude with the first and most tremendous of all stories with a theme so great and so universal that the writer can only express himself in poetry, though not in verse as we understand it.

What are the refrains of this poetry or poetic prose? What other repetitions are there in the narrative?

Make a list of the order of Creation according to "days" as here described.

What was the final work of Creation? What is meant by man having dominion? Was he given dominion over all created things?

Can you think of any picture that could be drawn to illustrate this tremendous story? If so, try to describe what might be shown in it.

On which "day" do human beings appear? What is meant by saying that Man was "the crown of creation"?

Name some of the qualities of this story—for example, is it wordy or restrained, dignified or mean, etc.?

Which do you find the most puzzling part of this story?

THREE OPERA PLOTS

An opera is a work which combines music and acting, the "lines" of the players being sung instead of spoken. It is a story in harmony, and the music in great opera interprets the story, while the story gives the musician fuller opportunity for the expression of the feelings of the actors in his composition. Every listener to opera ought to be continually asking: "Does this music match the story? Is it plaintive when the character is sad, cheerful when he is happy, rousing when he is successful or triumphant, and so on?"

The Flying Dutchman (page 201). Here we return to legend of the Middle Ages. Wagner liked this type of story for his operas (see also the two further examples

below) because he found in it strong feeling both of sorrow and joy as well as clear and simple dramatic narrative, such as can be understood by all people of every nation and clime.

The story as given in this book is, of course, a mere outline of the plot, and makes no pretence to comeliness of form or beauty of expression. Where, in your opinion, is the climax? What is the chief idea or theme of the opera?

Lohengrin (page 204). Once again Wagner turns to mediæval legend for a story on which to base his operatic composition. It is the marvellous story of the Holy Grail, which Tennyson says was

" . . . the cup from which our Lord
Drank at that last sad supper with his own."

and which, according to mediæval legend, could only be seen by one who was completely pure in heart like the Sir Galahad of the poet's *Idylls of the King*.

The Meistersingers (page 211). This again is a legend of the Middle Ages, when the minstrels and troubadours used to engage in contests of skill; but it is a jolly story full of laughter and with a happy ending, not mystical and tragic like the stories we have just read. In this case, however, the story is not so important as the music.

What is the theme of the work, and who is the hero?

Which of the stories of this book could be used for the composition of operas? Perhaps you know of some that have been used in this way.

BOOKS OF SHORT STORIES

which may be obtained from the Library.

ÆSOP'S AND OTHER FABLES. (Everyman's Library Edition.)

RUDYARD KIPLING: *The Jungle Book*—*Just-so Stories*—*Puck of Pook's Hill*—*Rewards and Fairies*.

JACK LONDON: *The Brown Wolf and Other Stories*—*The Love of Life and Other Stories*.

R. L. STEVENSON: *Island Nights' Entertainments*.

JOHN BUCHAN: *The Path of the King*—*A Book of Escapes*.

A. CONAN DOYLE: *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

E. A. POE: *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS: *In the Morning of Time*—*Kings in Exile*—*Kindred of the Wild*—*Haunters of the Silences*—*Watchers of the Trail*.

LEO TOLSTOI: *Parables and Tales*.

MORLEY ROBERTS: *Salt of the Sea*.

A. T. QUILLER-COUCH: *The Blue Pavilion*—*I saw Three Ships*.

THOMAS HARDY: *Wessex Tales*.

NEIL MUNRO: *The Lost Pibroch*.

ST. JOHN LUCAS: *The Lady of the Canaries*.

JOSEPH CONRAD: *A Set of Six*.

W. J. LONG: *A Little Brother of the Bear*—*Wood Folk at School*.

E. THOMPSON SETON: *Lives of the Hunted*—*The Biography of a Grisly*.